Islam and the West *Walter Laqueur • J.B. Kelly*

Historical Novels • Teacher Power • Kauffmann on Woody Allen

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The American Genius of George Balanchine

by Richard Poirier

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TRB

from Washington
October 11, 1980

Haruspications

We are practicing the occult art of haruspicy around the hollow square of the Sheraton-Carlton's breakfast tables in the Crystal Room. The Chaldeans did it and the Greeks and Romans did it and now you can't run a presidential campaign without it. The word comes from the Latin root *spectere*, to look, and *haru*, or gut. The Romans foresaw the future by examining the entrails of sacrificial animals at the temples. (For several millennia nobody would undertake a project unless the auspices were right; you don't want to profane the gods, do you?) Now you can't run a campaign without forecasts.

President Carter's chief augur-in-residence, Pat Caddell, is explaining his latest haruspication to a group of 30 absorbed journalists over bacon and eggs, examining oracles, portents, spells, and public opinion polls. Pat Caddell is a striking figure. He comes right off a Greek urn. He has jet black hair pulled down to his eyebrows like a wig, a jet black gladatorial beard with streaks of premature white, and a Roman nose. It is thrilling because he believes completely in what he is doing, and you know it influences the president, too. We are like the awed bystanders in the temple getting play-by-play reports from the priest as the slaughtered goat has its sacerdotal autopsy. We ask nervously for auguries. And what does Caddell say? He says, "It's as confusing as hell."

Every candidate has his haruspicator now. So do the periodicals and television chains. The polls are as powerful as TV in influencing strategy. They don't just tell you about states; they tell about political reactions by income, ethnic group, age, education, social position. It is part questionnaire, part divination. Make 1,003 scientific telephone calls and you know whether abortion is a safe election issue. Or suppose the League of Women Voters holds a debate—nobody knows who won until the polls are in. There is tension here around our breakfast table and the satellite tables as Budge Sperling presides. This is the national picture; our voices are hushed at its significance. There has been enormous disparity in the polls, Caddell says, but now they are straightening out. The entrails are beginning to shape up.

Caddell has deep-set eyes, a jerky, nervous utterance; he wears a vest in the hot room and removes his coat. Then he goes on with the race, weighing Carter against Reagan, with a reference to Anderson now and then. America can't wait any longer for election day. We must know how it's going ahead of time—not the issues but the race. It's a spectator sport. Reporters don't send their newspapers the heavy arguments; they love opposition, rows, epithets. The polls keep score with part psychology, part science, part mumbo-jumbo.

And how is it going? It's too early to call yet, I believe. My impression is that currently Reagan has the edge, particularly in big states' electoral votes, but it could go either way, which is amazing, considering Carter's twin albatrosses, inflation and unemployment. Caddell shows considerable detachment in his analysis. Sure he wants Carter to win. But he's a poilster too and has professional pride in his antique art.

Some critics can't choose between Reagan and Carter; they fear one and loathe the other. That isn't true of the leaders of organized labor. Ninety percent of the unions and leaders support Carter. As the campaign runs down, other groups fall into line, one way or the other. The gun lobby is for Reagan. The National Rifle Association, one of the most successful single-issue groups in town, has made its first presidential endorsement in 109 years. Carter's administration is guilty of a "brutal crusade against the civil liberties of firearms owners," its periodicals tell its 1.8 million members.

George Ball, former undersecretary of state, sees a Carter-Reagan difference. The prospect of Reagan's presidency "rather appalled me," he told ABC's "Issues and Answers." It's the Reagan call for arms "superiority" over the Russians, he said, compared to "parity," previously acceptable to presidents Nixon and Ford. Tut, tut, retorted Richard Allen, Reagan's chief foreign policy adviser, speaking on the same program. The platform plank of "superiority" is the "unanimous call for restoring the kind of superior American defense that the American people want and need." Presumably it means a nuclear arms race if Reagan wins.

George Ball was originally for John Anderson but now wants Carter. The Anderson drive is the most interesting thing in the race for many pollsters. Ten Anderson aides formally deny a *Washington Star* story which alleged that "even key aides feel Anderson has no chance." Not so, say the 10 aides in a signed letter—he is going to win "if all those who favor Anderson vote for him." It's a big if. *Newsweek* says, "The outcome in November may still hinge on the impact of John Anderson, whose own campaign is now in trouble."

Self-nominated and party-less, John Anderson is a new phenomenon in politics. Liberal columnist Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* argues tartly that he's still a conservative. In 1966 Americans for Democratic Action gave Anderson, a House Republican, zero for his voting record, while the conservative Americans for Constitutional Action in 1968 issued a special press citation for him as one who "stands firm against the liberal pressures." At some point he seems to have been born again politically. He's no ordinary office-seeker. Just last week he went to tobacco-growing North Carolina, attacking nicotine as dangerous and urging the dropping of tobacco price supports.

At the beginning of his drive Anderson said he would not be a spoiler, that if he saw no chance of election he would drop out. Now, under our madcap election system, he has been ruled eligible for federal subsidies if he gets five percent of the national vote. The kitty might be two million dollars. He presumably will take more votes from Carter than from Reagan, and might very well decide the election. If he drops out he loses his federal subsidy and might spend the rest of his life giving creamed chicken plate benefits to pay debts. What a system. It baffles even haruspicy.

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Correspondence

Eastern light and power

To the editors:

Before John Lukacs becomes too heady over his vision of "a new kind of light" that he tells us "has flared up in the East" ("The Light in the East," *TNR*, September 20), he might want to look into a book called *Since the Prague Spring* (Random House), to cite only one item. The Czechs, whose lives have been ruined, whose entire culture has been all but blotted out, have had some trouble glimpsing this light that Lukacs can somehow discern from the other side of the Atlantic.

"Power," he says, "is, of course, more important than prestige—but only in the short run." A comforting notion, but unfortunately a false one, as far as I can tell. Marxism may be bankrupt and the pope may be popular, but I somehow doubt that this "foretells the end of the Soviet empire." "Ideas matter," Lukacs assures us. The trouble, of course, is that power matters more—even in the long run.

Bradley Miller
Washington, DC

A response to Hitchcock's critics

To the editors:

In his reply (*TNR*, August 16) to my essay on Alfred Hitchcock (*TNR*, July 26), Stanley Kauffmann complains that I ignore much important film criticism. "[Hitchcock's] films contain more excellence than a single eulogy can honor," I had written, "and until they become the subject of intensive criticism, Hitchcock's place in history will remain unappreciated." In response to that sentence, Kauffmann mentions the existence of "books on Hitchcock by Robin Wood, Donald Spoto, Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol," and others, including "the book-length interview of Hitchcock by François Truffaut." "I have also seen books by Raymond Durgnat and John Russell Taylor."

In fact, at no point in my article do I suggest that Hitchcock's films have not been the subject of many writings. Rather, I argue that Hitchcock has been both lauded and condemned in the same condescending way (as a "technician," "manipulator," "master of suspense"), and that his films will suffer from this facile judgment "until they become the subject of intensive criticism."

Kauffmann's catalogue only demonstrates that such criticism is still lacking. Robin Wood's *Hitchcock Films* is the only good critical study, and it is modest in scope (beginning with *Strangers on a Train*) and over 10 years old. Chabrol and Rohmer's *Hitchcock*, published in 1957, can hardly be considered proof of ongoing discussion; it is, moreover, a tendentious book. Raymond Durgnat's *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock* is an obscure attack (like Kauffmann, Durgnat doesn't like Hitchcock's films), and Donald Spoto's *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock* is superficial, a quick jaunt through the whole corpus. John Russell Taylor's *Hitch* is not a work of criticism, "intensive" or otherwise, but a biography; nor is Truffaut's book a critical work, but, as Kauffmann himself points out, a "book-length interview."

Stanley Kauffmann also takes issue with my reference to "Hitchcock's low repute among reviewers": "[Miller] and I read different reviewers," he claims, then alludes to a few columnists who admired Hitchcock "up to 1941." If Kauffmann and I do "read different reviewers," then he must not be acquainted with the comments of Pauline Kael, Vernon Young, John Simon, Dwight MacDonald, Charles Higham, David Thomson, Leo Braudy and Charles Thomas Samuels, among others, which have all been negative, relying on the usual argument. And for anyone interested in seeing how Hitchcock's champions have used the same disparaging terms, I recommend the entries on Hitchcock in *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (Viking), edited by Richard Roud.

Mark Crispin Miller
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Church and politics

To the editors:

If Catholics turn to Reagan and the Republicans this year, as many might do, Democrats and whatever liberals might be left in office should begin their political postmortems by carefully examining the attitudes afloat in "Cardinal's Sin" by Richard Gaines and Marco Trbovich (*TNR*, September 27).

What we have in that article is a classic statement of the "enlightened" liberal outlook toward the Catholic church. If the Catholics are with us, the liberals say, on civil rights, on the farm workers, on the war in Vietnam (as Father Drinan was), and on all the other favorite issues, then the bishops should speak out loudly.

But if Catholics dare to raise their voices on abortion or aid to parochial schools, then the liberals denounce them for "meddling," for "polarizing," for engaging in a "single-issue moral crusade." (Wasn't the civil rights movement precisely that?)

How would liberals have greeted John Paul's ban on clerical involvement in politics had the incumbent in Massachusetts's Fourth Congressional District been Father Coughlin, not Father Drinan? For sure, the pope would have received the Eleanor Roosevelt Award from ADA.

Michael Kerper
Washington, DC

To the editors:

The civil rights movement was led by Baptist clergy and organized in Baptist church buildings. This was not wrong. It was very, very right, a wholly proper Christian witness against the sin of racism.

Similarly, Cardinal Medeiros bore Christian witness against the sin of abortion.

Anna Smelser
South Bend, Indiana

Review the book

To the editors:

When I sent *The New Republic* a copy of E. L. Doctorow's *Loon Lake* for review (*TNR*, September 20), I had hoped that your reviewer would write about the book. Instead, he reviewed my letter to your book review editor. What's worse, his review of my letter was so rude and garbled that I don't know whether I have actually learned enough from it to write a better letter next time I send out a book for review.

In addition, I have some literary advice for Professor Harris: it makes no sense to use the word "central," as he does, in the comparative sense—i.e., "Loon Lake, in fact, is not more central to this novel than anything else." But since he's broken the rule, let me break it too and say that the most central thing he should try to do next time he writes a review is actually to review the book he's been assigned.

Carol Schneider, Publicity Director
Random House
New York, New York

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

October 11, 1980

Politics and Pulpits

Is the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state in danger this election year? Some people think so. They are alarmed at the growing involvement of fundamentalist Christians, led by the likes of Jerry Falwell, in political causes and campaigns, most notably that of Ronald Reagan. They are distressed about Boston's Cardinal Medeiros, who warned his parishioners that those who vote for candidates who favor legal abortions "cannot separate themselves from that guilt which accompanies this horrendous crime and deadly sin." Alarm and distress are understandable, but the suggestion that these political efforts by people who disagree with us are somehow illegitimate is not understandable or attractive coming from liberals. *Boston Globe* columnist Ellen Goodman spoke for many when she wrote that the Cardinal's statement had created an atmosphere "rank with all sorts of unleashed bigotry." Even those who do not see a threat to the constitution nonetheless find it offensive that Baptist ministers and Catholic clerics should venture into political matters. "When ministers preach to 30 million parishioners that only one brand of politics has God's approval," wrote Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times*, "there is a terrible danger of intolerance." And speaking of intolerance, some feminists and civil libertarians in Boston have announced a lawsuit to challenge the Catholic church's tax exemption.

There is more than a trace of inconsistency, even hypocrisy, in pronouncements like these. Liberals have never objected to Catholic bishops speaking out in favor of civil rights or New England ministers protesting the arms race. When Martin Luther King denounced the Vietnam War from a pulpit in Atlanta, liberals did not rebuff his counsel on the grounds that it was dangerous to mix religion and politics. What some liberals now seem to fear is that religious people who do not share our political beliefs will try to translate their own into public policy. They are right to oppose many of the policies the Christian right favors, and to fear its strength. They are wrong to question the right of believers to ground their political views on religious values.

The clamor about violating the separation doctrine is even more mistaken. The constitution merely forbids the state to advance or support any religion or church. It does not forbid, and was not intended to forbid, churches to make efforts to influence the government's action. The doctrine places limits only on the state. It is included in the First Amendment, which explicitly guarantees all citizens the right of free speech. No one has yet suggested that conservative clerics should be silenced by government action. The suggestion is rather that the clerics should recognize their own duty to stick to purely spiritual matters. But it threatens the spirit of free speech to argue that any American is obliged not to exercise it.

The answer to the political organizing of the fundamentalist right, and to the Catholic church's campaign against abortion, is renewed political energy on the left and among believers in a woman's right to abortion. The danger lies in their views, not in the expression of these views. To demand that any person suppress his or her political beliefs because they are based on religious values is to practice the same intolerance that supposedly is the threat.

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White House Watch

Targeting Anderson

Before Ronald Reagan and John B. Anderson went through their televised encounter with each other and without Jimmy Carter the night of September 21, Carter assistant Stuart Eizenstat agreed to be interviewed afterward on NBC and CBS. Eizenstat, who heads the President's domestic policy staff, asked some of the Carter-Mondale reelection campaign strategists, among whom he does not count himself, what he should say about the Reagan and Anderson performances. He was advised to say what he said on NBC: "I think that what we've seen is a debate between Mr. Reagan, the Republican candidate, who has adhered to the extraordinarily conservative views he has had over the years, and Mr. Anderson, another Republican, who has abandoned the positions he has taken as a member of the House after 20 years, and in effect adopted the positions on conservation, on aid to the cities, and a number of other issues that the President has adopted." He said much the same on CBS, except that he didn't name any Carter issues that Anderson has adopted.

And that, at this writing 10 days later, is more than the President or Vice President Mondale or any Carter assistant and spokesman has said about Anderson's past record, the positions he took in what I refuse to call "the debate," and the positions set forth in his 1980 campaign platform. Whether and when and how—especially how—to deal explicitly with Anderson's past and present positions is a subject of intense discussion and concern at the White House and at the Carter-Mondale campaign committee headquarters. How to speak directly to the Anderson positions without building him and them up in the public mind is at the core of the discussion and concern. On October 1 the basic Carter campaign line remained: Anderson can't win the election, he therefore is a spoiler, and a vote for Anderson is a vote for Reagan. But the decision to adhere to that line was qualified in interesting ways and the discussions that accompanied the decision included some interesting nuances.

The decision applies to and restricts only the main national campaigners—Carter, Mondale, campaign manager Robert Strauss, and, with an occasional exception, Carter Cabinet members. They are programmed to stay concentrated on Ronald Reagan and the prospective horrors of a Reagan presidency. Regional and state Democratic personages, governors and lesser figures, and such non-official supporters as labor leaders, environmentalists, educators, ethnic group leaders, and the like are being encouraged to stress the basic line. They also are encouraged to supplement it with appropriate references, depending upon their audiences and clienteles, to Anderson's long record as a Republican congressman and, until he went independent last April, as a dismally failing candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. A smaller but influential category of Democratic quasi-pols—lawyers, lobbyists, publicists—in Washington and elsewhere who are consulted by and have some input to Carter officials and campaign strategists is being encouraged to take the same dual line with their friends and clients, saying things about Anderson and the various Anderson records that the President and his principal advocates deem it unwise to say for themselves.

The instinct for the jugular that characterizes Carter the campaigner has inclined him to go straight for Anderson, in much the fashion that he goes for Reagan, since Anderson began to emerge as a possibly significant candidate last summer. On the Carter advisory fringe there is an impression that he and his campaign manager, Bob Strauss, have argued about this. The word closer to Carter is that it's never come to an argument; that the President has willingly gone along with Strauss and his view that the way to counter Anderson is to deny him presidential attention and exposure. This is the view, of course, that caused Carter to refuse to debate Anderson and Reagan together or to debate Anderson at all until the President had it out head-to-head with Reagan alone. Carter never concealed his hard, pragmatic reason for denying Anderson the exposure that participation in an initial presidential debate would have provided—namely, that Anderson takes more votes from Carter than he takes from Reagan. Carter and his people don't trumpet the current decision to play down Anderson at the presidential level and leave his past and current records to low-level and covert surrogates. Carter, Strauss, and the others don't hide the decision either; Strauss, for one, emphasizes it and urges reporters to attribute it to him in their accounts.

Getting into Anderson's congressional record and present campaign positions would entail some difficulties and distortions, though none that would bother skilled campaigners. The line on Anderson's current views, as set forth in his platform and at the Baltimore encounter and in his campaign speeches, would be Eizenstat's line that Anderson is coopting Carter positions. By the rating of Americans for Democratic Action, the bellwether organization of aggressively liberal Democrats, Congressman Anderson scored zero during his first three years in the House (1961-63), exceeded 17 percent first in 1969, and peaked at 55 percent in 1978. But Carter advocates, overt and covert, should have no trouble picking out the numerous items that caused ADA president Patsy Mink to say on April 24, after Anderson announced his hitherto suppressed disgust with the two-party process: "Anderson the independent promotes the same policies as Anderson the Republican. And those are by no means liberal policies." That was truer in April than it is now, but it still is not entirely untrue. ADA's executive committee, by the way, rejected 72 to 54 the plea of

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Joseph Rauh and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. that ADA withhold endorsement of any candidate and thus free itself to support Anderson without endorsing him ("Liberals and Carter," *TNR*, September 27). Eighty committee members voted to endorse Carter, 16 to endorse Anderson, and seven Barry Commoner. Twenty-five members abstained.

The Carter faction arguing that the less said about John Anderson the better was heartened by the first polls following the Baltimore encounter. They showed without notable exception that Anderson gained nothing or next to nothing from his performance against Reagan. A CBS-*New York Times* poll taken partly before and partly after September 21 indicated that Anderson lost more standing than he won with people who watched and heard part or all of the affair. A *Newsweek*-Gallup poll taken September 24 and 25 showed 39 percent for Reagan, 35 percent for Carter, and 14 percent for Anderson as of then. Patrick Caddell, Carter's pollster, told associates he was "astonished" by the showings of a national poll he took the week of September 22. It showed Anderson gaining nothing whatever from his go with Reagan and slipping overall, in a slide that Caddell thinks likely to continue. These findings bolstered the Carter line that Anderson is merely a spoiler who can't win. But other polls produced similar evidence and Caddell in effect advised the Carter people that they'd be fools if they took joy in the results. Despite his decline, Caddell said, Anderson actually was hurting Carter more in that week than he had been when he was polling 15 percent or better. His platform and Baltimore positions, Caddell figured, were driving Republicans back to Reagan and holding the Democrats who had been repelled by Carter and attracted to Anderson. This was said to be especially menacing in such key states as New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and New Jersey. Horace Busby, one of Lyndon Johnson's White House Texans, told the clients of his political advisory service that in mid-September, judged on prospective electoral votes, Reagan was all but a sure winner. Busby mentioned Anderson only in terms of his possible effect on the Carter vote in New York.

Two political columnists, Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover, reported September 26 that "with some exceptions" Anderson's "leading supporters and advisers have abandoned their dream of winning the election." Anderson, ducking the central point of the report, said in response that he expected to campaign to the finish. All 10 of Anderson's principal staff advisers said in a letter published September 30 in the *Washington Star* that they had not given up: "Mr. Anderson not only can win, he will win if he has an opportunity to present himself to enough Americans."

That opportunity turns on whether the Anderson campaign gets enough money to pay for a TV blitz that it has little or no chance of financing from contributions. Anderson counsel Mitchell Rogovin, who had persuaded the Federal Election Commission to declare Anderson eligible for post-election federal payments if he gets five percent or more of the popular vote November 4, asked the commission to rule in effect that bank loans secured only by that prospect and by a 10 million dollar insurance policy on Anderson's life would not be regarded as illegal contributions. The FEC staff recommended two optional responses. Neither option suggested an outright finding that such loans would be legal. The FEC chose an option that was basically favorable to Anderson but concluded: "The commission cautions against any use of this opinion as a legal sanction for any particular loan transaction."

John Osborne

Politics

Reagan Coasts

On the basis of electoral vote projections, Jimmy the Greek is quoting Ronald Reagan as a two-to-one favorite in the election. On the basis of how bets are being placed, Lad Broke's of London now makes President Carter a narrow favorite, at four to five (at the end of August Reagan was slightly favored at eight to 13). On the basis of trauma-induced caution, I would keep my money in my pocket. Reagan remains ahead, yes, and he apparently has picked up some in the suburbs at John Anderson's expense, but President Carter is gaining steadily and is waging by far the more aggressive campaign.

Reagan's managers think they are solidly ahead in states totaling 200 electoral votes, whereas Carter leads in states with around 100. Reagan's private polls—and Carter's, too—indicate that Reagan still holds an edge also in enough of the key battleground states of the north, midwest, and south to make it over 270 electoral votes if the election were held right now. "All we need," said one top Reagan operative, "is to win three more states, two big ones like Illinois and Ohio, plus one medium-sized state like New Jersey or Florida. And we have a good chance, too, in smaller states like Wisconsin and Louisiana." The Reagan strategy is to ride the current lead through November 4 rather than push for a decisive victory and risk making big errors that could cost the election.

If this strategy works, analysts probably will chalk it up to smart politics, even though Reagan will arrive in the White House without the commanding electoral mandate he will need to govern in the face of a strongly Democratic Congress. But there also are political risks to Reagan's mistake-avoidance strategy. Reagan's managers acknowledge there still are large swatches of the electorate that do not know who Ronald Reagan is and what he stands for. At the rate

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things are going, such people may never find out—or be bored to death by what they see. Reagan's advertising illustrates the problem. His first big buy featured the candidate by a desk calmly talking about his positions, demonstrating what a reasonable, moderate man he is. A test group of viewers is said to have responded well to the ads, but even Reagan's staff finally agreed they were unintelligible and dull. Those spots have been replaced lately with another set featuring ancient film of a much younger Governor Reagan striding this way and that and signing one bill or another as the voice-over touts his record as chief executive in California. This ad, too, is a yawn. But, more to the point, the advertising fails to define the candidate in viewers' minds in the context of contemporary issues. A rock-'em, sock-'em series of indictments of Carter's record, featuring Reagan in high dudgeon and deep indignation, could tell voters where Reagan wants to go, as well as what he's against, but the Reagan campaign has so far been too conservative to unleash them.

Some anti-Carter ads financed by independent Republican groups do assail the president's record on inflation and national defense, but they tend to concentrate on bloodless numbers. Once this July in Detroit, there was a Reagan Republican party that offered the country real alternatives, that based its appeal on deeply held popular values ("Family, Neighborhood, Work, Peace, Freedom"), and claimed to be the new party of hope. This fall, that party has gotten lost in a fog. It could be that the party and the candidate exhausted their new ideas writing speeches for the convention. Or it could be that they never really had any.

Reagan's campaign so far raises real questions about whether a Reagan administration could govern the country. If the Reaganites are afraid to risk their candidate and ideas in a hurly-burly election contest against Jimmy Carter, if they are afraid to agree to a face-to-face debate with a vulnerable incumbent, and if they get defensive at the first sign of challenge, how will they summon the boldness and self-confidence that they claim the United States needs to face the Soviet Union or a hostile Congress and skeptical allies?

Nor does the campaign seem to have the resilience it takes to respond to new challenges or opportunities. When 26,200 people lined up in Baltimore to apply for 77 Social Security jobs, it was a perfect opportunity for Reagan to make political hay on the unemployment issue ("Americans want to work, but Carter denies them the chance"), but there was nothing forthcoming from Reagan. Carter is gaining ground because the recession is ending, but Reagan has yet to point out that interest rates are climbing again, houses will be hard to buy, the underlying inflation rate is rising, and sooner or later we'll have another recession, probably worse than this one. When Carter attacked Reagan for allegedly injecting racism into the campaign, where was the attack on Carter's failures to help blacks, on Carter's own record of toying with racism?

The organization of the Reagan campaign also raises questions about whether it can manage a government. It was not a bad idea to have Leon Jaworski head Democrats for Reagan, but apparently nobody had the wit to warn Jaworski that he might have to explain his statement during the Texas primary (when he was supporting George Bush) that Reagan was an extremist. Result: Jaworski blurted out that he'd rather see a "competent extremist" in office than a moderate who is incompetent. In fact the episode suggests that Reagan's staff is incompetent. Reagan's campaign is organized in the very same "spokes of a wheel" fashion—with many equals reporting directly to Reagan—that sowed confusion in the early Carter White House.

In contrast, the Carter campaign is running hard and hitting fast. Granted, it has to, trailing as it does. Granted, Carter's political acumen has nothing whatever to do with governing the country well. Granted, Carter is often cynically deflecting attention from the failures of the last four years. But the campaign is politically effective.

The racism episode is one example. Though editorial writers have chastised Carter for low-road politics, Carter's attacks seem to have helped his cause in the black community. It's not strictly correct to say that Jimmy Carter won the 1976 election solely on the strength of black votes. (He tripled the usual Democratic presidential vote among white southerners, for example, without whose support he could not have carried every southern state except Virginia. On the other hand, Carter still failed to win a majority among white southerners, or whites nationally.) But he was put over the top on the strength of overwhelming support from blacks. According to Gallup, Carter got 85 percent of the black vote. According to the Joint Center for Political Studies, he got 90.4 percent, higher than any Democratic candidate ever except Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Since 1976 Carter has had little except trouble from civil rights leaders and members of the congressional black caucus, all charging that he has failed to live up to his promises of aid for their depressed communities. It was only this year, thanks to deft liaison work by White House staffer Jack Watson, that Carter gained support from most of the nation's black mayors. But still, the combination of the Andy Young resignation, Carter's recession, and ill-feelings left over from his primary battle against Edward Kennedy left Carter in a bad way with blacks. Polling in August by New York's Datablack showed Carter's support among blacks nationally at only about 60 percent.

Last week both Reagan and Carter advisers were saying that they think Carter can count on the same high percentage of support from black voters that he got in 1976. The problem for Carter, they agreed, was turnout. Datablack polls showed that about 10 percent of black registered voters indicated they were not

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going to vote this year. In 1976, just a two percent falloff would have cost Carter Ohio (where 243,000 black votes gave him a 7,586 margin), and 10 percent would have cost him Louisiana (where he won by 77,000 with 264,000 black votes).

Whether or not a memo will ever surface recommending that Carter hit hard at Reagan's alleged racism in order to energize black voters, Reagan's advisers have no doubt that this was Carter's intent. And they acknowledge that it may be having an effect. "How do you fight it?" wondered one of Reagan's black-affairs staff members last week. The Reagan campaign is scrounging the landscape to find a civil rights leader who will allege that Carter in his demagoguery is playing blacks for fools, but so far it has been unable to unearth anyone. Meanwhile, Reagan's own attempts to win black support have been muted. One ad in *Ebony* magazine and *Black Enterprise* echoes the theme of Reagan's one good speech to a black audience —the "jobs, jobs, jobs" address to the Urban League— but then promises only that Reagan will not promise much as president, and will operate by "quiet performance." Reagan seems to be appealing to blacks on a middle-class, anti-jive theme rather than slashing at the Carter record.

While Reagan rests, Carter is making maximum use of the incumbency—aiding the steel industry, distributing grants to cities, deferring school desegregation in Chicago—and is running imaginative ads on television. "My number one responsibility is to defend this country," Carter says in one of the spots, and the rest is a colorful display of rockets, planes, tanks, and ships. In another, Carter is telling workers "we are still, militarily, the most powerful nation on earth. . . . Politically, the most powerful on earth. . . . Economically and, I think, morally and ethically, we are the most powerful nation. This country is one that believes in human beings." And with housewives in Mrs. Reed's back yard, the president says, "back in March, we had absolutely uncontrollable inflation and interest rates. . . . We put in some very mild credit restraints, and people like you, in a spirit of cooperation and patriotism, just clamped down on credit. . . . The results were more effective than we had ever dreamed . . . . This began to put people out of work. So we had to take those credit restraints off. They served their purpose. The inflation rate has dropped sharply."

Reagan ought to be able to blast at Carter on all the issues underlying such ads—military preparedness, our competitive economic strength, Carter's inflation and recession. But he isn't. Blacks are left to think that Reagan is a racist and TV watchers that Carter is "a military man . . . and a man of peace," one who "cares about peace . . . and about people." The odds in this election may still favor Reagan, but nobody right now should bet against the power of incumbency, political energy, and Rafshoonery.

Morton Kondracke

NEA seizes power.

The Teachers' Coup

What's the most powerful special interest group in Washington? If you think it's the oil companies, the steel industry, or the AFL-CIO, think again. Almost overnight, and almost unnoticed, these veteran power brokers have been pushed aside by a relative newcomer to the hurly-burly of capital politics—the National Education Association, the biggest organization of teachers in America. In the last four years, the NEA has helped elect a president, almost single-handedly forced a Department of Education down Congress's throat, and lobbied successfully for dramatic increases in federal spending on education. If you think all this newfound power will be deployed for benevolent purposes, think again here too. The NEA has only one purpose: to further the interests of teachers. It has made clear that the interests of teachers and the interests of education don't necessarily coincide.

In 1976 the NEA made its first big splash by mobilizing support for Jimmy Carter in Iowa and several other caucus states that proved indispensable to his bid for the Democratic nomination. In 1980 the organization mobilized all the resources at its command to beat back a challenge from Edward Kennedy, and again its help probably made the difference between victory and defeat for Jimmy Carter. NEA's growing strength was most evident at the Democratic convention, where it boasted 310 delegates—nearly 10 percent of the total and more than any state. When it came time to vote on the vital "open convention" rule, which would have allowed Carter delegates to vote their consciences on the first ballot, the president's fate was at the mercy of the NEA. If those delegates had deserted Carter on the rules fight, the nomination would have been Kennedy's. But the NEA held its delegates in line and Carter escaped an "open convention." Within hours Kennedy conceded defeat.

The NEA's power at the convention was apparent in other ways too, most notably in the platform. Eight of the 34 members of the platform task force were teachers, as was the chairman of the committee concerned with "Government and Human Needs." Consequently the section on education reads like the NEA's legislative laundry list.

Now the NEA is throwing all its efforts into helping Carter beat a Republican who has pledged to abolish its cherished Education Department. Some 6,000 full-time field workers are spending most of their time these days on working to reelect Carter.

Naturally the president has been grateful for this support—so grateful that some critics call him "a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NEA." Carter got the NEA's endorsement in 1976 mainly because he promised to push for a Department of Education, which would serve no purpose but to give teachers a bigger

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place at the federal trough. He got the NEA's endorsement this year mainly because a Department of Education was approved last year by Congress. Carter's obsequious pandering to the NEA has included matters both big and small. Federal spending on education has risen by 73 percent since 1976, still less than what Carter asked for from Congress. The Education Department has proposed new rules to require school districts to provide bilingual education—another old NEA cause, mainly because it would mean more jobs for teachers. The organization's last president, John Ryor, went straight from the NEA to the White House staff. NEA officials have boasted that their phone calls to the White House are given the same priority as calls from Cabinet secretaries.

All this power is heady stuff for an organization which until 1976 had never even endorsed a candidate for president. But the transformation of the NEA into a kingmaker has not happened overnight. For decades the organization had been active in politics at the local and state levels, where the money was doled out. In 1965, with the passage of the first major federal aid to education bill, the federal government began to play an increasingly important role in directing and financing the nation's public schools. Within a few years the NEA realized that its lobbying efforts would have to be extended to the federal government. That meant it also would have to elect allies to Congress. Its endorsement of Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island in his 1972 reelection campaign is invariably cited as a turning point for the NEA. "Before they arrived, I was a two-to-one underdog," Pell said later. "Then an army of teachers began knocking on thousands of doors and making thousands of phone calls, and I won by 33,000 votes." In 1974 the organization set up a procedure for endorsing presidential candidates, and two years later voted to back Carter. In 1976, with its state and local affiliates, it spent more than three million dollars in support of various campaigns. This year it has endorsed 281 candidates for the House and Senate, the vast majority of whom can be expected to win. In 1978, four out of five of the candidates with NEA backing were elected. Ken Melley, the NEA's political director, says its political action committee will contribute about $400,000 to candidates this year.

But the NEA's political activism is only one part of a broader transformation. Twenty years ago, it was a conservative "professional organization" dominated by superintendents and other administrators. But in the 1960s it lost ground to the militant American Federation of Teachers, which made no bones about being a union and led a host of teacher strikes. In 1967 the NEA voted to support any local affiliates that went on strike. Since then its membership has grown from fewer than a million to 1.8 million. Although the AFT has grown even faster, from 136,000 members in 1967 to nearly half a million today, it has not been able to close the vast numerical gap. The AFT has outmaneuvered its rival mainly in a few big cities, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. The NEA dominates rural and suburban areas.

The two organizations had grown so similar that by the early 1970s they came close to merging. But the negotiations collapsed in 1974, largely because the NEA wouldn't agree to affiliate with the AFL-CIO (as the AFT had)—partly out of the distaste many conservative members had for unions, partly out of a desire to remain independent. Since then relations between the NEA and the AFT have grown increasingly bitter. The AFT opposed the Education Department and has criticized its new bilingual regulations, which the NEA has praised guardedly. It supported Kennedy for the Democratic nomination. One continuing source of friction is the issue of whether or not the NEA is a union. Phyllis Franck, an AFT official, says, "The NEA uses the union label selectively. In the south, they say they're not a union." Don Cameron, an assistant executive director with the NEA, says, "We're a union. That's no longer in dispute." But some NEA literature continues to refer to the NEA as a "professional organization." Cameron admits that some affiliates in southern states don't think of themselves as unions. Most of them also are prohibited by state law from engaging in collective bargaining.

A more interesting question is why the NEA has been so successful in its recent ventures into politics. The first answer is sheer numbers: its 1.8 million members amount to more than Carter's margin of victory over Gerald Ford in 1976. Political director Ken Melley says 90 percent of the NEA's members are registered to vote; 85 percent voted in the last presidential election. Not only that, but he estimates that every NEA member actually influences two and a half votes, giving it some influence over more than four million voters. Probably more important than the NEA's huge membership is its almost even distribution throughout every state. Unlike most unions—the UAW in Detroit, the UMW in West Virginia—the NEA has members in nearly every community, since nearly every community needs public school teachers. It has an average of 6,000 members in every congressional district. Teachers also are dispersed within communities—some live in affluent areas, some in working-class neighborhoods. Most of them are bright, articulate, and reasonably well-informed, making them naturals for political activism. With their relatively short workdays and long summer vacations, teachers have more time than most people for volunteer work. "They're wonderful raw material to build a political movement with," says Michael Barone, a Washington political consultant. What is more surprising than the NEA's success is that it didn't happen sooner.

Aside from voting strength, the NEA has also demonstrated both tenacity and skill in its legislative efforts, particularly the Department of Education. Don Cameron says the organization didn't "get ser-

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ious" about the issue until 1971 or 1972. Then it began asking congressional candidates to fill out questionnaires about their positions on assorted issues, most importantly an Education Department. It supported only those who endorsed the latter, and after they were elected, the NEA reminded them frequently of their commitment. One Senate aide says many members agreed to support an Education Department only because they never expected to have to vote on it. The NEA also brought in 2,000 teachers to lobby on the Hill. When the bill came to the floor, the NEA had the votes to win—this despite almost universal derision in the nation's editorial columns and the almost total lack of support from other influential groups. The bill passed narrowly in the House but won by a margin of 72-21 in the Senate.

It isn't certain, however, that the NEA will be able to get the other things it wants. Currently its priorities are a federal collective bargaining law for teachers and an increase in the federal share of educational expenditures from nine percent to 33 percent. Either of these is likely to be at least as long and hard a fight as that for the Education Department, since they have no perceptible public support. Equally important to the NEA is blocking measures it regards as threatening, such as tuition tax credits. On all of these issues, the NEA is practically alone, with formidable opposition arrayed against it. But as it showed in the Education Department fight, the NEA may have resources enough to carry the day.

All these gains may be good for teachers, but they're likely to be bad for American education. The NEA has gone to great lengths to dispel the old image of teachers as dedicated, selfless, and idealistic. Through the NEA teachers are organizing purely for the advancement of their own class interests, even at the expense of broader educational objectives. On any educational issue, the NEA is sure to take the side that will mean the most jobs for teachers. It wants to reduce the average class size to 15 students, for example, which would roughly double the number of teachers required to teach the same number of students. It favors bilingual education, no doubt because it would mean more jobs for teachers. A recent issue of the NEA publication, *Today's Education*, even suggested starting children in school at age four—which also would require more teachers. On any of these questions, a reasonable case can be made for the NEA's position. But it's obvious that if the NEA has its way, the decisions will be based on anything but their educational merits. Likewise on the issue of using standardized tests to measure the competency of students and teachers. Some educational experts who oppose using such tests say the NEA never minded using tests for judging students. Only when they were proposed as a way of evaluating the performance of teachers did the NEA discover their flaws.

The NEA in many ways represents a reaction by teachers against the problems they have faced in the last 10 years: declining enrollments, tight budgets, teacher surpluses, public dissatisfaction with public schools. Its political efforts are an attempt to protect teachers against these threats by finding new sources of revenue, expanding (or at least maintaining) the job market for teachers, and discouraging the spread of alternatives like private schools. But chances are the NEA will aggravate the original problems, inflating the cost of operating public schools, frustrating the efforts of parents to ensure that their children are being taught basic skills, and generally placing teachers beyond accountability. If that happens, public education is bound to suffer, and so are a lot of teachers.

Stephen Chapman

Taqiya rules the waves.

The Shatt-al-Arab Saga

The recent Iraqi decision to wrest complete control of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway from Iran signals the failure of the 1975 Algiers agreement. That accord was supposed to have rectified what the Iranians saw as the intolerable one-sidedness of the treaty of 1937, which the Iranians had agitated for to adjust what they claimed was the patent unfairness of the 1914 border demarcation called for in the protocols of 1911 and 1913, which were to implement an 1847 treaty, which was negotiated to amplify certain articles of an 1823 treaty, which reconfirmed a 1746 treaty, which confirmed the 1639 Treaty of Zunab, which left basically intact the 1555 Peace of Amasya, a Turco-Persian treaty which roughly defined what today is the international, if somewhat oft-violated, border between Iraq and Iran.

For more than a century and a half, the locus of dispute on this border has been a portion of the Shatt-al-Arab. The exotic place name, with which the electronic and print media have been bombarding the American public, means in Arabic "the shore or riverbank of the Arabs." Beginning at the traditional site of the Garden of Eden, the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Shatt winds its way through some 125 miles of palm groves, marshes, alluvial mud flats, and salt-encrusted wasteland to the head of the Persian Gulf. The river provides the only outlet to the sea for Basra, Iraq's principal port, and for the major Iranian ports of Khorramshahr and Abadan. Just below Khorramshahr, about halfway down the Shatt's course, the river is joined by one originating in Iran's Zagros mountains, the Karun. From this point south, the additional flow broadens and deepens the remaining 60-odd miles of the Shatt's length. Who controls the

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Shatt-al-Arab from Khorramshahr south, and whether it is an international waterway or Iraqi territorial waters, have been the matters in dispute. No government in Baghdad can pretend to control the Persian Gulf without control over Iraq's only outlet to it, and no government in Tehran can enjoy the secure use of two of Iran's major ports when their anchorages can be reached only through the territorial waters of a hostile state.

Until nature and the British Empire conspired to make the Shatt-al-Arab a major bone of contention between the Ottoman Turkish Empire (on today's Iraqi side of the border) and the Qajar Persian Empire (on today's Iranian side), the issues had been chiefly who claimed the allegiance of what border tribe and the positioning of customs posts along the frontier. But toward the end of the 18th century, the Karun river pushed its way into the Shatt, altering its course and forming islands later to be contested. Shortly afterward, the British pushed their way into the Gulf, with the usual results.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the sheikhs in control of Abadan Island and Muhammarah, today's Khorramshahr, were in loose allegiance to the Persian Empire. The Turks across the river, seeing in Muhammarah a potential rival to their own port of Basra as a thriving commercial center, attacked and demolished the town in 1837, claiming its ruins and all of Abadan Island as Turkish territory. The British and the Russians, at this point busily carving up Asia, then prevailed upon the somewhat reluctant Turks and Persians to accept their good offices as mediators. The result was the Treaty of Erzerum in 1847. Actually, the Persians fared very well in this agreement. They were granted fully recognized sovereignty over the future Khorramshahr, its anchorage, and Abadan Island, as well as the right to navigate the Shatt-al-Arab freely. A commission was charged with deciding the exact boundary, but failed to do so. Finally, in 1869, a map of the frontier was produced. On it two lines were drawn, with the vague statement that somewhere in between was the true boundary.

All this provided the ingredients of potential catastrophe, of course, and made for the kind of apparent chaos which affronts the Western mind. But the people on the spot managed quite adequately, reaching an informal working agreement placing the frontier in the middle of the stream and providing for customs and police. They managed, that is, until the British Royal Navy switched from coal to oil. Then today's city of Abadan began to develop into an important oil terminus.

So it was that in 1910 the British, in tandem with the Russians, once again felt compelled to offer the Turks and Persians their services as honest brokers. Protocols based on the 1847 treaty were signed in Tehran and Constantinople in 1911 and 1913, and in 1914 Persian and Turkish commissioners, with the advice of British and Russian mediators, attempted to demarcate the border. Sir Arnold Wilson, a British mediator for the commission, later recalled having tried to convince the Turkish commissioner of the need to reach a clear decision, even if it was unfavorable to one side. "No," he was told, "let us find a form of words which will evade the real issue, whilst appearing to settle it." The Turk argued that by juggling some words they might keep the peace for another 10 years. Sir Arnold wrote that the undecided question "will doubtless exercise the ingenuity of a future generation of diplomats and frontier officials." Three generations later, his words ring true.

The 1914 attempt did provide that the Shatt-al-Arab be assigned to Turkey, except for five miles in front of Khorramshahr, where the border was to run along the median line of the river. The honest brokers and one of the principals soon had a falling-out. Two days after the final protocol was signed, Turkey declared war on Russia. A week later, Britain declared war on Turkey. In less than a month, an Anglo-Indian expeditionary force had entered the Shatt and taken Basra.

After World War I, the British carved a state out of three former Turkish provinces, installed as its king the Hashemite Feisal (of T. E. Lawrence fame, immortalized by Alec Guinness), called it Iraq, and had it assigned to themselves as a mandate. By the early 1930s, a nominally independent Iraq was complaining of Persian acts of aggression in Iraqi territory. Reza Shah, first and second-to-last of the Pahlavi dynasty, had since made himself Persia's king of kings and brought the tribes along the Persian side of the Shatt under central control. He found it intolerable and inconsistent with Persian dignity that, while most of the Shatt's traffic was for Persian ports, his country did not enjoy the old informal rights of policing the river.

The Persians now realized, they said, that the border should have been drawn down the *thalweg* of the river, the deepest point of the channel. Their position was that the 1914 demarcations, like the 1847 Treaty of Erzerum, had been forced upon them by the imperialists when Persia was at her weakest. The earlier agreements were therefore void. This claim is a recurring theme in the disputes over the waterway, and in the 1930s the shah's emissaries offered with approval the example of Hitler's attitude toward the Treaty of Versailles. Exhibiting the propensity of single-ruler regimes to discover their constitutions at the most convenient of times, the Persians also held that their law required parliamentary ratification of the 1847-1914 instruments. Somehow overlooking the fact that Persia's *majlis* first convened in 1906 and that the 1911-14 protocols made no provision for ratification, the Persians claimed that the agreements and the borders were therefore invalid.

The Iraqis maintained simply that Iraq was a successor state to the Turkish Empire, and as such could

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claim *ipso facto* all the rights awarded the Turks in earlier agreements on the Shatt. Iraq took its case to the League of Nations and offered to put it before the Hague. When the Persians approached American officials for support, they were told that the major reason America had not joined the League was to avoid having to take sides in European and Near Eastern border disputes. The American public would not stand for it. Reza Shah's regional alliance designs and his realization that he would probably lose in an international tribunal made a compromise agreement necessary. The Persians, who in the meantime had renamed themselves Iranians, decided to settle out of court.

The Iraqi-Iranian treaty of 1937 awarded Iran four miles of river to the *thalweg* line in front of Abadan, and treated the Shatt as an international river with free navigation for the merchant vessels of all nations and the warships of both parties. Iran kept the five miles off Khorramshahr to the *thalweg*.

The Iranians seemed mollified for a time, and during the 1940s had other things to preoccupy them. With the restoration of the second Pahlavi shah secure, the Iranian foreign minister in 1954 told the American ambassador in Tehran that Iran had only temporarily agreed to the 1937 treaty. Iran had been under British imperialist pressure, the minister explained. When in 1958 a coup overthrew Iraq's pro-Western monarchy, the dispute intensified. Iraq was no longer under British protection and was providing refuge to anti-shah Iranians. Arguments arose over searches of vessels, flags to be flown, and pilotage in the Shatt. By 1960 the Iranians were detailing what they called Iraqi aggressions and insisting that the boundary be shifted to the *thalweg* along the entire disputed portion of the waterway.

A 1960 State Department intelligence report, recently declassified, explained the Iranians' general attitude toward treaty obligations in a manner which most Orientalists would find pleasing. The report maintained that the seasonal Iranian attempts at proving that the various instruments on the Shatt-al-Arab were invalid, attempts which were often "tortuous, weak, and even illogical," were based upon the Islamic doctrine of *taqiya*, or dissimulation. This doctrine permits the believer to hide his true convictions. If he is confronted by a major force or risk, he temporarily and with mental reservation may comply with any request made. *Taqiya* is particularly pronounced among Shiites, who form the overwhelming majority in Iran, since their sect was so often subject to persecution. The report held that the Iranians need not necessarily have thought out their positions in *taqiya* terms, but that they merely followed an attitude ingrained by the doctrine. It could put all Iran's international obligations under a cloud, the report concluded with no little prescience.

After more changes in the Iraqi leadership, each of them more unsettling to the shah's regime than the last, Iran formally declared the 1937 treaty a dead letter in 1969. Iraq's response was to declare the Shatt its internal territorial waters and threaten to close it to Iranian shipping. Border incidents increased in frequency and ferocity, but it was in Iraq's north that the shah found his rivals' weakest point. Iran's support of the Kurdish rebellion was a constant drain on Iraqi resources and morale. By 1975, the Iraqis were ready to come to terms, and under Algerian auspices agreed to the *thalweg* line as the border along the entire disputed portion of the Shatt-al-Arab. In return, the shah agreed that Iran would not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs, and promptly terminated his aid to the embattled Kurds. Within days the rebellion collapsed.

Iraqi-Iranian relations were cordial during the last years of the shah's reign. After his fall, neither anti-imperialist regime was willing to compromise the gains of its imperial predecessor, be it Ottoman Turkish or Pahlavi. There was no question of the Iranians now inciting Iraq's Kurds anew. They were busily shooting their own. But when Khomeini's crusade to make the world safe for mullahs meant agitating the Shiites who make up perhaps 55 percent of Iraq's population, virtually nullifying the articles in the 1975 accord on interference in Iraq's internal affairs, the Shatt-al-Arab dispute came full circle. (The eviction of Persian mullahs from Turkish dominions actually had been a major stipulation in the 1639 Treaty of Zuhab.) Iraq was now stronger, and Iran's Western protector had been neutralized.

Days before launching his offensive across the border, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein unilaterally abrogated the 1975 Shatt-al-Arab agreement. In the best tradition of *taqiya*, he explained that five years ago Iraq had been forced to accept the humiliating accord, and that what was more, Iran had been supported by the forces of imperialism. *Plus ça change*, as ever in the Persian Gulf.

Bruce Hardcastle

Bruce Hardcastle is a Middle East specialist working in the diplomatic branch of the National Archives.

The generals bit off a mouthful.

Turkey's Trials

It is possible that the takeover by the military in Turkey on September 12 may have come too late. The army took over, as General Evren, the chief of staff, declared, "to prevent the followers of fascist and Communist ideologies, as well as religious fanatics from destroying the Turkish Republic." The motive certainly was not personal ambition: the problems facing the new rulers are daunting and the Turkish

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Republic has many powerful enemies from within and without. General Evren and his colleagues are facing an uphill and unpopular struggle. Once the enemies of freedom became deeply entrenched, once chaotic conditions prevailed throughout the country, it became clear that recovery would be neither short nor painless. It is pointless now to demand the "speedy restoration of democracy" in Turkey, since democracy, as we understand it, no longer existed even before the coup. What went wrong in Turkey and why did the Kemalist consensus, which prevailed for so long, break up in the end?

Certainly economic crisis, corruption, inflated administration, and incompetence all played a part. To some extent it was the fault of the political institutions that had been copied from the Third French Republic. These institutions were found deficient in France and discarded; they were even less suitable for Turkey, which needed a strong executive, something akin to a presidential democracy, to steer it through the political and social storms.

But all this does not account for the particularly murderous form of terrorism that spread in Turkey, which has claimed over 5,000 victims in recent years. This terrorism, it seemed for a long time, was not directed against the government or the police, let alone the armed forces. It seemed to be a contest of strength between the "Marxist" extreme left and the Islamic far right. Why should there be so much hostility between the camp hoisting the red flags and quoting Lenin and right-wingers displaying green banners invoking the Koran? This certainly was not a case of violent class struggle. On most questions there seems to be agreement. Both left and right are violently anti-Greek, anti-Israeli, and of course anti-Western, and both want to leave NATO. Five days before the recent coup, the far right demanded the resignation of the Turkish foreign minister because he was too subservient to the West. Their vote of no confidence carried because it was supported by the Turkish "left." Only on Afghanistan are there differences of opinion. Some factions of the extreme left have welcomed the Soviet intervention, others have criticized it; the extreme right has demanded greater help for the Afghan rebels. But it was certainly not over Afghanistan that the two sides went to the barricades.

It is equally difficult to find the great divide in domestic policy. Of course the inspirations of the two extremist groups were different and so were their respective programs, but once allowance has been made for the strikingly different ways in which these ideologies were packaged (Marxism vs. Islam), it was still not clear to many outside observers why people should kill each other with such ferocity about relatively minor bones of contention. Put in the simplest form it was a struggle of power between left-wing and right-wing populism. And this despite the fact that there was far more in common in the basic attitudes of these two fanatical creeds than between them and the democratic center and the Ataturk tradition.

Terrorism in Turkey spread not because the terrorists were so strong but because the government was so weak, and because the terrorists received considerable support from outside. There has been no stable government in Turkey for many years because neither of the two major parties had a workable majority. Suleyman Demirel's Justice party was making more and more concessions to the Islamic revivalists eager to turn the clock back and to introduce Iranian conditions in Turkey. The same was true, *a fortiori*, for two smaller groups, the National Salvation party and the para-fascist National Action party. Ecevit's Republican party was heavily infiltrated by Communists—at least 30 of its deputies in parliament were crypto-Communists. The Turkish authorities committed a major mistake when they refused to legalize the Communist party in the country; a legal Communist party appearing under its own banner in public would have been less successful in attracting popular support. In the absence of a reasonably strong central goverment, with even the judiciary and the police split into two opposed factions, terrorism virtually turned into civil war. Foreign governments more or less openly intervened, with the Syrians and Libyans arming and financing the "left-wing" terrorists (Libya, for all one knows, may have financed both sides). The extreme right, according to Turkish press reports, was almost self-financing as the result of a profitable drug trade with Europe. Bulgarians also supplied arms, and East Germany provided increasingly strident daily radio broadcasts.

In the Eastern part of Turkey militant Kurdish groups such as Talabani's Shivanists, the Apoists, "Freedom Road"—all armed and financed from the Soviet Union—the Razgari group, and the "Five-Sectionists" (Communists who reject both Soviet and Chinese guidance) resumed the armed struggle. The Kurds, like the Turkish "left," are divided into many factions; to enumerate and to describe them would require a small encyclopedia. These divisions are of great interest to the connoisseur of sectarian affairs. But they are not of momentous political significance, for as in other countries, most of the smaller factions, with all their criticism of "Soviet revisionism and betrayal," tend to end up on the periphery of the Communist party. Only the Communist party has the organization, the finances, and the staying power to persevere. From the communist point of view, the splits on the left are, of course, regrettable, but they also produce certain advantages: a division of labor becomes possible with regard to the uses of political violence. The Communists can appear even underground as a respectable political party opposed to terrorism on principle. Yet at the same time, through different channels, the armed struggle (i.e. terrorism) can be encouraged and supported.

Historically, the Turkish Communist party is one of

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the oldest in the country. It played a role in the period immediately after World War I. It was suppressed by Kemal Ataturk, was revived as an illegal group during World War II, and was again suppressed in 1951. Its present renaissance dates back only six or seven years. The beginnings of the extreme right also can be traced back several decades. It had its origins in the opposition to Kemal's secularism. Since then the extreme right (or "Idealists" as they prefer to be called) has espoused Panturanism and Moslem revivalism. While there is no more ideological unanimity on the extreme right than on the left, most of its factions seem to feel comfortable, broadly speaking, with some form of clerico-fascism such as recently has appeared in other parts of the Middle East. By 1979 large sections of Turkey were divided into liberated zones in which one of the armed camps established more or less complete control. While the minister for internal affairs denied this, Turkish newspapers published detailed lists complete with maps describing the division of the country. Thus Adana, in southwest Turkey, where some of the worst incidents took place and which is inhabited by about 100,000 people, was in revolutionary hands, while six urban quarters, populated by some 70,000 people, were dominated by the "Idealists," and (the reports continued) "on normal days not even electricity meter-readers could enter if they hold leftist views."

Izmir, Turkey's second most populous city, was largely in "revolutionary" hands. Konia was a bulwark of the other side. Kars (near the Soviet border), Artvin, and Denizli were mainly in left-wing hands, whereas Erzincan, Kahramanmaras, Girezun, and other places were dominated by the "Idealists." In these circumstances, facing total political disintegration at home, the growing threat of separatism, and economic ruin, the army decided to step in, for the third time in 20 years. On the past two occasions army intervention, while providing short-term palliatives, brought no lasting change.

Since the situation is far more critical now than in the past, it remains to be asked what army rule can achieve. Turkey owes Western governments and banks some 16 billion dollars and urgently needs much more. But Turkey has become a bottomless barrel; loans and even gifts will be at best stopgap measures. Extensive structural reforms are needed for a lasting recovery. Ironically it was Turkey's oil bill—some 2.5 to three billion dollars this year—which added more than any other factor to the current crisis, yet both extremes of the political spectrum were hard at work to conceal this fact.

However desperate the economic situation, it is the political constellation which induces most pessimism. It was Ataturk's vision to make Turkey a modern, Western-style state. At the time this vision was shared by most Turkish patriots, except the most backward elements in society—of which, admittedly, there were a great many. Fifty years later it seems that Ataturk's noble dream has failed. Large sections of the population distrust the kind of parliamentary democracy they have experienced; it has not provided leadership, and it has inspired no loyalty. Among the militants of the left and right, particularly in the universities, anti-democratic politics is almost *de rigueur*; there is the familiar third world syndrome of radical phraseology and contempt for manual labor, of fascist elitism under a thin veneer of ultra-democratic rhetoric, of great fanaticism but no desire to engage in constructive work. The militants may be willing to murder each other, but not to go to the Anatolian villages to help educate the peasants.

Is it possible to build democracy in a country in which democrats are in a minority, and in which political tolerance has virtually disappeared? There is the possibility that the army—paradoxically the last bulwark of democracy—will fail, and that Turkey will lapse into either the kind of anarchy now prevailing in Iran or a dictatorship in the Iraqi style, with similar standards of civilization and humanism. These are not encouraging perspectives. Since Turkey, in contrast to Iraq, has virtually no oil, it will not be able even to afford the services of propagandists in the West (as the Iraqis do) extolling the virtues of the new regime with its dynamic, forward-looking leadership and preoccupation with raising the living standards of the people.

There are some faint rays of hope in this dismal situation. The historical perspective provides some comfort. For a very long time Turkey was the sick man of Europe. Then it collapsed as a great power, suffering from seemingly incurable internal ills. Yet Turkey showed an astonishing capacity for recovery in the 1920s and 1930s. Facing the present national crisis with the survival of the republic at stake, it may find new energies and a new solidarity. Secondly, Turkey has a far bigger and more influential class of educated people and it is a more developed country than the countries to its east; whether it likes it or not, it is at least half European. Once the real meaning of the alternatives to Kemalism—tyranny, neo-barbarism, anarchy—are fully digested, there may be greater readiness to fight against them. The attraction of clerico-fascism and the various left-wing sects will not last long; perhaps in a few years their bankrupcy will be obvious to all, with poor Iran fulfilling an educational function—and that of a deterrant—for other countries. Lastly, it could well be that anti-democratic forces in Turkey have appeared more numerous and influential than they really were simply because the authority of the central government had vanished. It is possible that military rule will have a calming influence and that the political fever will cool.

Walter Laqueur

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Islam's revenge.

War Against the West

By J.B. Kelly

> The reason for Moscow's receding influence is disarmingly simple: Marx and mosque are incompatible.
>
> —John Kifner, the *New York Times*, September 14, 1980

We are fated, as the old Chinese chestnut has it, to live in interesting times, and never more so than in the last 18 months, which have been witness to one of the most resounding collapses of foreign policy to have occurred in modern history. Almost the whole of the strategy pursued by the Western powers in the Middle East since the end of World War II lies about us in ruins, leaving our vital economic and political interests in the region virtually defenseless—and this at a time when they are more seriously menaced than ever before. The Iran-Iraq war is only the most recent symptom of this dismal collapse. All we can do here is look at one of the major causes of this disastrous failure in foreign policy: the misconceptions that have prevailed in the West about the nature of Islamic society and government in the Middle East.

For more than a generation now we have been told by those in government, the media, and the academies that we have nothing to fear from Islam, least of all any deep-rooted animosity against the West. The possibility that the actions of Islamic governments and peoples might be inspired by hostility to Christendom was derided by our mentors. Such notions, they assured us (barely able to smother their giggles), belonged to the days of the British *raj* in India, to the Sepoy Mutiny and the Afghan Wars, to the Mahdist uprising in the Sudan and the exploits of the mad mullah in Somaliland—in fact, to that whole vanished Kiplingesque world of dark conspiracies in Moslem cities, of the secret preaching of *jihad* in remote villages, and of fanatical tribesmen pouring over the residency walls, *jezail* in hand, and a cry of "Din! Din! Din!" on their lips. The contemporary Moslem world, we were assured, was altogether a different place, which every day drew closer to the West as it rapidly absorbed Western technology, Western culture, Western standards, and Western values.

Far from posing a threat to the West, so the conventional wisdom had it, Islam actually served to diminish the likelihood of eventual Soviet domination of the Middle East. The incompatibility of Islamic doctrines with Marxist dogma virtually ensured that Iran and the Arab states never would ally themselves voluntarily with the Soviet Union against the Western powers. If some Arab states have entered into political, economic, or military relations with the Soviet Union, it is only because of the intransigence of Israel in refusing to concede to the just demands of the Arab states for the restitution of occupied Arab lands and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people. Since Israel has been sustained consistently by the United States in her obdurate stand, the Arabs have had no choice but to enlist the countervailing support of the Soviet Union.

Such are some of the principal tenets of the orthodox canon concerning Islam and its relations with the West. They bear little resemblance to the actual conduct of the Moslem states of the Middle East (Turkey apart) over the past quarter of a century and more. Algeria, Libya, Syria, Iraq, North Yemen, South Yemen, Kuwait, Egypt, and the Sudan all have entered into compacts of one kind or another with the Soviet Union. South Yemen, now under a Marxist dictatorship, has all but become a Soviet colony. Libya, Syria, and Iraq afford the Russians military facilities on their soil, and the last two are linked to the Soviet Union by defense treaties.

That the Soviet Union, like imperial Russia before it, was destined to become a power in the Middle East cannot be gainsaid. But it is equally true that the Russians have entered the Middle East during the past 25 years at Arab invitation. It is not enough to ascribe the invitation, or the subsequent consortings of the Arab states with the Soviet Union, to the anger and indignation aroused in them by the continued existence of Israel. If Israel never had been born, some pretext or other would have been found by the Arabs to bring the Soviet Union into the Middle East. For the enmity felt by the Moslem Arab world for the Christian West is such that it was eventually bound to cause the Arab maxim of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" to operate to embrace the West's most powerful foe.

It is much the same with the Iranian Shiites. Fear of the Soviet Union failed to inhibit the upsurge of anti-Western and Shiite fundamentalist sentiment in Iran in 1978-79, despite the long record of Russian aggression against that country. That upsurge and its aftermath also exposed the irrelevance of the belief in the incompatability of Islam and Marxism with which the West has been wont to comfort itself. The achievement of some kind of philosophical synthesis between Marxism and Islam is not essential to the cooperation of radical political groups. The emotions and expectations aroused in the Arab and Iranian masses by the preachings of militant Moslem divines are much the same as those stimulated by the propaganda of Marxists. Both open up to the masses prospects of material plenty and earthly happiness. Both are directed against the West, and against "imperialism," which is equated with capitalism, the economic basis of Western society. These various strains, as Elie Kedourie has so cogently demonstrated, are evident in the pronouncements of the Ayatollah Khomeini, and especially in his railing against the West for its debauchery, its materialism, and its corrupting effects upon Moslem society. It is almost immaterial whether the Moslem or the Marxist component is uppermost in Khomeini's thought. What matters is the animosity which he and his counterparts in Sunni Islam (like the Libyan dictator, Colonel Qaddafi) evince against Christendom and

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the West; and it is this very animosity which serves to reconcile Moslem extremist with Marxist revolutionary.

If anything exposes as a sham the alleged mutuality of interests between Islam and the West in opposing the advance of the Soviet Union in the Middle East, it is the behavior of the Arab oil-producing states and Iran since 1970 over oil supplies and prices. According to the doctrine of common interest, the Arabs and Iranians will be deterred from demanding too high a price for their oil by the knowledge that if they weaken the West economically they will impair its ability to defend them against the Russians. In 1970 Colonel Qaddafi forced an upward revision of prices by compelling the oil companies operating in Libya to cut production and by threatening them with nationalization. At the outset of 1971 the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, under the leadership of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, obtained a further increase in prices by threatening an oil embargo if its demands were not satisfied. To augment their income from oil production still further, the OPEC governments embarked in 1972 (through the device known as "participation") upon the compulsory acquisition of a share in the equity and assets of the oil companies operating in their territories. Despite the fact that the agreement reached by OPEC with the companies at Tehran at the outset of 1971 was supposed to run for five years, OPEC tore up the agreement in the summer of 1973. Thereafter it ceased even to go through the motions of negotiating prices with the companies: instead it laid them down by fiat. In October 1973 OPEC virtually doubled the existing price of oil, and two months later doubled it again. During this interval the Arab members of OPEC used the pretext of the Yom Kippur War to reduce oil production and place an embargo upon the export of oil to the United States and certain other Western countries, one of the chief purposes of which was to force the Western industrial world and Japan to acquiesce in the huge increases in oil prices.

"Participation" proved too slow a means for the Arabs and Iranians to acquire a controlling share in the oil companies' operations. Although they had signed agreements providing for a 51 percent interest in the companies by 1982, they proceeded to ignore these agreements and to nationalize the companies outright in the mid-1970s. (The trail had been blazed for them by Qaddafi's expropriation of British Petroleum in Libya at the end of 1971, by Iraq's nationalization of the Petroleum Company in June 1972, and by the shah's revocation of the Iranian oil consortium's concession early in 1973.) By 1978 the price of the "marker crude" (standard Arabian light) had risen to $13.66 a barrel, nearly 10 times what it had been in 1970, while the prices of Libyan, Algerian, and Nigerian crude were substantially higher.

Still the Arabs and Iranians were not satisfied. Nor did the former seem to be deterred from their constant pursuit of ever-mounting oil revenues by what was happening around them—in Ethiopia, in South Yemen, in Iran, and in Afghanistan. The 12 months from December 1978 to December 1979 witnessed the greatest upheavals that had taken place in the Middle East since World War II, beginning with the fall of the shah and ending with the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Yet those same 12 months also saw the most spectacular rises in the price of Middle Eastern oil that ever had occurred in the history of the oil industry. All pretense by OPEC of regulating the price of oil sold by its member states was thrown to the winds. A frantic free-for-all developed as Iran and the Arab oil states tried to outdo one another in the outrageousness and arbitrariness of their price increases. Before 1979 was over the Gulf marker crude had doubled in price to $26 a barrel (over 17 times what it had been 10 years earlier), while Libyan, Algerian, and other light crudes were priced at around $35 a barrel. A further increase of two dollars a barrel was imposed in May 1980, bringing the Saudi Arabian marker crude to $28 a barrel and the light crude to $37-$38. OPEC's revenues in 1979 amounted to $200 billion and were expected to exceed $250 billion in 1980.

So much, then, for the oft-repeated assurances of our latter-day Panglosses that the Arabs and Iranians will moderate their conduct over oil prices by a sober appreciation of the need not to impair the West's economic strength and hence its capacity to defend the Middle East against the Soviet Union. Two days after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, Kuwait raised the price of its oil by an additional two dollars a barrel. Kuwait's aggressive oil policy, which has not been accorded the attention it deserves in the Western press, is not confined to her persistent advocacy of frequent oil price rises. Next to Libya, Kuwait has been the most strident proponent of "conservation" (that is, arbitrary reductions in output) as a means of keeping both demand and prices buoyant. Kuwait vehemently opposed the setting up of the International Energy Agency, and it has continued to condemn the stockpiling of oil by the Western industrial nations and Japan for the very reason that they have resorted to it—to reduce their vulnerability to blackmail by the Arab oil states.

A similar malignity toward the West's stockpiling of oil is exhibited by Saudi Arabia, the particular target of its displeasure being the United States's national strategic petroleum reserve. By the terms of the agreement on economic and military cooperation concluded between the United States and Saudi Arabia in 1974, the United States more or less undertook to guarantee the integrity and independence of Saudi Arabia under its present rulers. In return, the House of Saud pledged itself to furnish the United States with a steady and uninterrupted supply of oil, to maintain prices at a constant level, and to invest the bulk of its surplus earnings in the United States. Saudi oil production was to reach 10,500,000 barrels a day by January 1, 1978, and any excess over 8,500,000 barrels a day was to be placed at the disposal of the United States for addition to the national strategic petroleum reserve. The Saudis have failed to fulfill their side of the bargain, except perhaps in the matter of depositing their surplus funds in the United States. Not only has Saudi Arabia's oil output failed to rise above 9,500,000 barrels a day, but a substantial part of it was siphoned off for sale on the spot market at prices well above $26 a barrel. The principal participants in these transactions are reported to be connected with the ruling house itself.

All these dubious activities—such as Saudi Arabia's tacit acceptance of overflights of her territory by Soviet aircraft bound to and from Aden—have been taking place at a time when the Gulf region has been thrown into greater turmoil than it has known for a genera-

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tion, and when the Soviet Union has expanded and consolidated its grip upon the perimeter of the region more decisively and ruthlessly than ever before.

That Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the other oil-producing states of the Gulf should have conducted themselves over the past 18 months in such a manner is highly revelatory of their sense of proportion, their scale of values, and their true attitudes toward the West. Nevertheless the Western democracies—or at least their governments—have persisted in proclaiming their faith in the rationality of the regimes in power in the Gulf states. The West's capacity for self-delusion is apparently boundless. Despite the slack in demand, the Western nations have braced themselves to absorb, with nothing more than perfunctory and feeble protests, the further price rises when OPEC meets in Baghdad next November to ratify the long-term strategic plan worked out over the past year under the guidance of Sheikh Zaki Yamani for the constant augmentation of OPEC's revenues, whatever the state of the oil market.

The conduct of the Arab oil-producing states over the past decade has demonstrated beyond the slightest doubt that their actions are motivated far more by rapacity and by rancor toward the West than they are by fear of the Soviet Union. Up to the middle years of this century the Arabs knew nothing of the Russians, least of all at first hand. The Russians always remained over the horizon, invisible to Arab eyes, until they made their appearance in the mid-1950s in the capacity of suppliers of arms to Nasser's Egypt. With the West it was different. The West had been present in the Middle East in one form or another since long before the advent of Islam. Thereafter the role it played in the area more often than not was that of an adversary of Islam. The memory of the Crusades dies hard: so the West, which is equated in the Arab mind with Christendom, has remained a familiar and tangible enemy, one which has never ceased, at least in popular mythology, to oppress and exploit the Arab peoples.

Racked thus by powerful sentiments of grievance and resentment against the West, the Arabs see the oil weapon as a gift sent by God to redress the balance between Christendom and Islam. It enables them to act as though the might and grandeur of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates has been restored, to lay the Christian West under tribute to the Moslem East, and to fulfill the destiny which God in His infinite wisdom has ordained for those to whom He has chosen to reveal the one true faith. Extravagant though these fancies may appear to Western eyes, they are very real to those who entertain them, and infinitely more appealing than the calmer dictates of reason.

Convictions and emotions of a comparable kind also agitate the Iranian Shiites. They are reinforced by that attribute of the Iranian character which has been commented upon unfailingly by Western students of Iran over the centuries—excessive vanity. The shah, before his fall, was the embodiment of this particular national characteristic. He constantly harangued the West for its decadence, drawing unflattering comparisons between what he saw as its unremitting slide into impotence and the vigor with which Iran under his leadership was striding toward the millennium. As Iran's emergence as a great power upon the world's stage was to be accomplished by mulcting the West of its treasure, it is hardly surprising that his was always the loudest voice in OPEC clamoring for higher oil prices. His ambivalence toward the West bordered upon schizophrenia. While he was infatuated with Western technology and with his own dreams of transforming Iran within the space of two or three decades into a mighty industrial state, he almost pathologically resented his reliance upon Western support to preserve Iran's independence against the Soviet Union. He never (so he was in the habit of impressing upon every Westerner to whom he granted an audience) had forgotten or forgiven the humiliation he had suffered over the deposition of his father, Reza Shah, by the British in 1941, when British and Russian troops had occupied Iran. That the Russians were equally responsible for Reza Shah's precipitate abdication was something he preferred not to allude to, at least in public.

The shah's aversion to acknowledging that his country owed continued existence as an independent state to British support up to World War II and to American support since then was fully shared by the Iranian ruling classes. It is almost superfluous to say that it is likewise shared by the new rulers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and that the determining factor in both cases is Iranian vanity. The uncomfortable awareness that the Soviet Union may be deterred (to the extent that it is actually deterred, which is problematical) from prosecuting its designs upon Iran by uncertainty about what the Western powers' reaction might be does not sit well with the Ayatollah Khomeini and his henchmen. In truth, it may be this very awareness that impels them to their almost demented heaping of obloquy upon the United States, a luxury which, it might be added, they probably would not have reveled in so wantonly if they did not know from past experience that they could indulge themselves with impunity. What other passions or obsessions may have moved the Iranians to treat with such gross contumely the only power in the world capable of shielding them from the baleful intentions of that other power which has consistently intimidated them for the past two centuries it is beyond the capacity of Western minds to descry or comprehend with any certainty. Suffice it to say that the Iranians never would have dared to bait the Soviet Union in the same fashion.

Afghanistan, a Moslem country, has been invaded and occupied by the Russians, who are suppressing the Afghans' resistance with a ruthlessness that is reminiscent of the methods employed a century ago by General Mikhail Dmitrievich Skobolev, one of the Russian conquerors of Central Asia. "I hold it as a principle," Skobolev wrote in 1881 after the massacre of the Turcomans at Geok Tepe, "that in Asia the duration of peace is in direct proportion to the slaughter you inflict upon the enemy. The harder you hit them the longer they will be quiet afterwards. My system is this: to strike hard, and keep on hitting until resistence is completely over; then at once to form ranks, cease slaughter, and be kind and humane to the prostrate enemy." One might be forgiven for assuming that the brutal subjugation today of a Moslem state by an infidel and atheistic power would have set the air waves over the Middle East pulsating with blood-curdling denunciations of the Soviet Union, that the *jihad* would have been preached from every mosque from Rabat to Islamabad, and that a grand alliance of the major and minor Moslem states for the liberation of Afghanistan would have been formed by now. The least one might reasonably have expected is that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Libya would individually or in concert devise means to help their Sunni co-religionists to resist their conquer-

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ors, and that the last three states would seriously review treaty and other relationships with the Soviet Union.

This, of course, has not happened. While wounded Afghan guerrillas die for want of medical supplies, the rulers of Saudi Arabia fret over the offense caused them by a Western television film, Colonel Qaddafi is directing the assassination of Libyan exiles in the streets of Western cities, and the Baghdad junta is underwriting terrorism in London and elsewhere in pursuit of its vendetta against Khomeini's Iran and Shiism in general. (There is perhaps more reason, though little sense of self-preservation, in Khomeini's apparent insouciance over the Afghans' fate; for Afghans and Iranians have been at each others' throats for centuries over race, religion, and territory.) Khomeini is, in any case, now amply preoccupied on his western borders. Islam, for all the wordy pronouncements to the contrary, is a very tenuous bond among those who profess its tenets, which leads one to wonder why such satisfaction was expressed in Western capitals earlier this year when the representatives of the Moslem powers met in Islamabad and condemned the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. What else were they expected to do? Approve it? What counts is not words, especially in a part of the world where rhetoric is the common addiction of rulers and ruled alike, but deeds, and the concrete measures taken by the Moslem states of the Middle East to avenge the rape of Afghanistan are so trifling as to be indiscernible.

Meanwhile, although not a single Moslem state in the world today is being coerced by a Western power in any way, least of all by force of arms or violation of its territory, the cacophony of complaint and vituperation against the West continues to ululate undiminished from Arab and Iranian throats. It is almost matched by the volume of unthinking cant issuing from Western politicians and pundits about the basic community of interest between Moslem and Western nations in opposing the Soviet Union's advance to the Gulf. Nothing, it seems, least of all the unremitting rancor displayed by the Moslem world toward the West, will shake the faith of our political and intellectual leaders in the ultimate rationality of Middle Eastern governments. A logical corollary of this faith has been the decade-old policy of entrusting the security of the Gulf and the protection of the West's strategic and economic interests in the area to the joint care of Iran and Saudi Arabia. Not even the collapse of the shah's regime and the transformation of Iran into bedlam have forced any sweeping revision of this policy. The same voices that assured us for years about the solidity and steadfastness of the shah's Iran are now extolling the vigor and capacity of the rulers of Saudi Arabia, earnestly counseling the proper display of deference to their sensibilities—and especially their opposition to the stationing of Western military forces anywhere in the Arabian peninsula—so as not to alienate their natural feelings of affinity with the West. Some gullible souls are even turning wistful eyes toward Iraq, while prattling about the feasibility of winning over to the Western cause the unsavory Baathist junta in Baghdad. Iraq's dedication to the preservation of peace and stability in the Gulf has now been demonstrated by her deliberate embarkation upon a war with Iran. Not only has the conflict revealed the fragility of the oft-proclaimed unity of Islam, but it has also (most notably in Syria's provision of weapons to Iran) exposed the flimsiness of the fraternal bonds which link the Arab states.

Surely the time is long overdue for a thorough housecleaning of our conventional assumptions about Islam in its relationship with the West, to rid ourselves in particular of those musty and dangerous illusions about an identity of Moslem and Western interests in opposing the Soviet Union, whose persistence is obscuring both the menace which now confronts us in the Gulf and the urgent necessity to counteract it. It is doubtful whether the magnitude of the shift in the balance of power in the region caused by the Russian occupation of Afghanistan has been grasped even now in the West. Up to the end of 1979 the "great game" in Asia, whether the contestants were Imperial Russia, British India, the Soviet Union, or the United States, always had been played behind an Afghan, an Iranian, or Arab facade. When the Russians invaded Afghanistan in force they not only broke the rules of the game but threw them out of the window. If the West is ever to restore the balance of power in the Gulf region, however makeshift that restoration may be at first, its response will have to be on a scale commensurate with the Russian initiative. To attempt, as in the past, to use the local Gulf powers as surrogate defenders of the West's interests no longer will suffice—if it ever did. Worse than that, it will be seen as a confession of impotence, a failure of nerve, and as such it will be read as an open invitation to the Soviet Union to push its luck to the limit.

Through their vacillation and willful self-delusion over the past decade, the Western nations have left themselves no alternative but to project their military power into the Gulf region. Obviously the risks inherent in such a policy are very great. How the Soviet Union will react is unforeseeable, although as realists the Russians probably would acknowledge that while control of the Gulf's oil reserves is a highly desirable strategic objective for them, it is not a matter of life and death as it is for Western Europe. An upsurge of Moslem fanaticism against the West may be taken for granted as the response to any Western intervention, though whether it will amount to more than a ritual outpouring of scurrility and the customary carnival of ruffianism is hard to say. In any case, the reaction can be, and will have to be, endured. For the perils of inaction in the present disturbed condition of affairs in the Gulf region are far more serious than the risks attendant upon resolute action.

What the Russian occupation of Afghanistan may presage (the tortuous explanations based upon the theory of the "turbulent frontier," which the Soviet Union's apologists in the West have been putting forward, may be safely discarded) is not entirely clear, although a portent may exist in what General Skobolev had to say 100 years ago about the strategic significance of the Russian conquest of Turkestan. "Our presence in Turkestan in the name of the Russian interests can only be justified by precipitating to our own benefit—the solution of the Eastern Question—in other words, to dominate the Bosporus. Otherwise the Asiatic hide is not worth the tanning, and all our efforts in Turkestan will have been in vain. . . ."

drawing by Mike Keefe

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Intimation Through Imitation

All through Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories*, I was clamped by two contrary feelings. The first was compassion—for Allen himself. How desperately he wants to be more than he is. Most of the film, from start to finish, hangs in method and in manner on *8½*. (The opening sequence also has a touch of Bergman, the ticking of a clock.) The protagonist is a film director named Sandy Bates, born Sidney Finkelstein in Brooklyn, and some of the scenes with women are straight Allen; but all the rest clings to Fellini's masterwork. Free-flow and dream-like continuity, a cascade of vivid faces seen close and briefly in what could be called silent-movie makeups, black-and-white cinematography by Gordon Willis openly inspired by Gianni di Venanzo, just as Santo Loquasto's costumes get their exaggerations from Piero Gherardi—all these visual aspects proclaim their source. And there's more. Besides the fact that it's about a film director's private and professional troubles, it also takes place at a spa, sort of; it has an ornate railroad station; his mistress visits him; it has teasings about priests and nuns; and it ends with the director's mock death.

Now 10 or 20 minutes of this might be good parody, a super Johnny Carson skit—Fellini in Flatbush, and After. But an hour and a half makes it slide out of the funny into the desperate. Satire becomes parasitism. Allen isn't kidding Fellini or even revering; he's saying that he wishes he *were* Fellini and by the very act of persistent imitation confesses that he knows he never will be. Every once in a while there's a faint hint of mockery of his master, but it's like a feeble gesture of control by an embarrassed man who finds himself riding a tiger.

The story's occasion is a film weekend at a hotel—modeled on actual weekends run by a well-known reviewer—where there's a festival of Bates's films for paying guests with Bates on the premises. So there are plentiful chances for oddball characters with odd requests, clips of films, flashbacks, and fantasies. As *Stardust Memories* went on, one of my conflicting feelings, compassion, deepened. It went past Allen himself because he's not only talking about his own limitations but those of American film, therefore (*absolutely* therefore) of American culture. What postwar American director could he have envied and imitated—recognizably? The only defined and significant new film styles in the postwar era, Allen's era, have been European. (Or Japanese.) When Guido, the director in Fellini's film, stagnates, reassurances out of his life and his society—crystallized for him by a very "continental" magician—come to his rescue. But nothing comes out of Bates's life, crystallized by any cultural manifestation, to help him. Everything in his past and his present only drains him more. One salient difference between *8½* and *Stardust Memories*: Guido's mock-death is suicide; Bates's mock-death is murder by a demented admirer. It confirmed my sad feeling that Bates is much more a symptom than a suffering romantic hero.

Lately I saw another American imitation of Europe, Paul Mazursky's *Willie and Phil*, which opens with the close of *Jules and Jim*, then deals with two New York men and their love for one woman. But all three of the actors were so repellent and their characters so flatly written—Mazursky has a laundry-list mind that thinks, if he checks off every modern problem, he has dramatized it—that the picture is an always-remote bore. (Besides, the three characters, all of whom have seen *Jules and Jim*, never seem to realize that they're trying to live it.) At least *Stardust Memories* is keen enough to cut closer than that. Mazursky's film is about trying to be Truffaut; Allen's film is about not being Fellini.

But conflicting with my compassion was some anger. Almost all the subsidiary characters in *Stardust Memories* are stupid and/or ugly. Allen hasn't grasped the core of Fellini's caricature: the human race is deplorable and silly and even vicious but he's one of them and can't completely shed fellow-feeling. Allen's trouble isn't (heaven knows) that he thinks he's prettier or better than these characters: it's exactly the reverse. He's trying to equate the world with his own view of himself, smearing dat ole debbil Jewish self-hate all over everyone. This peculiar brand of egotism, a hypersensitivity that breeds insensitivity, made me angry.

One notable change from previous Allen films is in the main women. Cyril Connolly said that one benefit of success for a writer is that it gets him into interesting society and enriches his work. The advantage of success for Allen, apparently, is that it has enabled

Films Worth Seeing

Airplane! If you saw the trailer, believe that the picture is just as funny most of the time. (If you didn't see the trailer, the picture is funny anyway!)

The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith. One of the few good Australian films in the recent flood. A half-caste, c. 1900, runs amok and pays the white man's consequences. Not quite the tragedy it aims at, still it's full and deep and wonderfully acted.

The Great Santini. Robert Duvall is good, but why did he choose to play a career Marine as a street tough? Blythe Danner and Michael O'Keefe are good, too. The picture is spotty, but the son/father spots are fine.

My Bodyguard. A sharp film about a high school boy terrorized by other boys is marred by cute stuff about his family. The terror is real and important; the family is neither.

SK

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him to meet more glamorous neurotics. The Brooklyn background is still there, vividly etched in flashbacks, but now he knows internationals. Marie-Christine Barrault (of *Cousin, Cousine*) is Bates's French amour, seemingly a mother-earth type but a bit wacky; and Charlotte Rampling is his English amour, an out-and-out neurotic, subject to episodes. (The viewer must decide personally whether it's credible that they want Allen as a lover—I mean of course Allen as film figure. I still think his pictures would be better, exactly as written and directed, if someone else—say, Dustin Hoffman—played the leads. But I know I'm in a minority. In Trieste, this August, Allen's pictures filled the theaters.)

Rampling is in the two best moments in the film, non-imitative moments, Allen's own, fine. During one of her episodes she is seen in her hospital room, in a tight closeup, telling the off-screen Allen that her doctor has fallen in love with her, asking Allen whether he is "seeing" anyone. The scene was shot a number of times, obviously, because Allen has used a lot of the takes of the brief moment, snapping on one after another in mimesis of Rampling's mental state and his feelings about her. Excellent. And there's a lazy Sunday morning with Rampling in his apartment. She is lying on the floor on her stomach, reading. He is sitting at a table, eating. She glances up idly, he looks at her. Nothing happens. He tells us on the sound-track that this was one of the rare moments in his life when he was completely happy. It's lovely. In fact, the use of Rampling, the feeling for her face that—with the help of Willis's camera—he gives us, is Allen's best sheerly cinematic achievement to date.

The smoothness of the direction as a whole may come from following a model closely, but smooth it certainly is. There are some funny lines: Allen is a funny writer. And some funny sights. (In one film-studio sequence, Allen is in the foreground, in priest's garb, arguing with Rampling. Far in the background, three nuns come in and start to practice a tap routine. It's Fellini fiddled—one of the few truly satiric bits.) The worst moment is, as usual, when Allen attempts the physical: in one "film clip" he's in top hat and tails, dancing as one of a vaudeville trio. Mel Brooks understands these things; Allen doesn't.

Fundamentally, finally, *Stardust Memories* washes out. It isn't good satire. Of Fellini? To what end? From what standpoint? It isn't good bitter comedy about success; it adds nothing to that subject. Any one of us could have written the story-conference dialogue or the lines about wanting to get away from it all. It isn't even an effective cry for help; the cry is so insistent in the crier's own ears that he's deafened to what he might possibly hear around him.

George Balanchine: from Leningrad to New York.

An American Genius

by Richard Poirier

This past season at the New York City Ballet there were four essentially new works, good to masterful. *Ballade*, to the music of Fauré, featured Merrill Ashley, a dancer refined now to a kind of beaming technical brilliance, and Ib Andersen who, less than a year since he left the Royal Danish Ballet, has become one of the best dancers in a company so strenuous for newcomers that it took even the superbly confident Peter Martins three years to find his proper place in it. There was *Walpurgisnacht Ballet*, done originally for the Paris Opera production of Gounod's *Faust* in 1975. Like the earlier *Tchaikovsky Suite no. 3*, it is a romantic piece full of fast, open, loose-haired movement by the women, though with little of the complex elasticity of *Ballade*, and it is led by the great Suzanne Farrell, with her sometimes dizzying, seemingly off-balance improvisations. There is also *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* to music by Richard Strauss which shows unabashedly Balanchine's taste for theatrical lavishness, for romps and high jinks, as against the minimalization of costume and decor in *Agon* or *The Four Temperaments*. Peter Martins, who is its star, is a dancer of such noble and exact bearing that it's always surprising to observe his capacity for comedy and for dramatic characterization, though it shouldn't be, given what he also does in *Coppélia* and in *Union Jack*.

But the great event this season was *Robert Schumann's "Davidsbündlertänze."* "If you can't pronounce it, don't come," Balanchine remarked in an interview with Anna Kisselgoff, adding that Schumann was too great a composer to have a ballet named after anything but his own music. Still, the title is unprecedented in the emphasis it gives to the composer's full name.

Balanchine means the title as a signal homage and also, I think, as an indication that the dance, like the music, will have much to do with Schumann's life, which ended in 1856 at age 46, in a sanitorium he entered in 1854 after the most severe of his nervous collapses. The title refers to a suite of 18 piano pieces composed in 1837 and to a society, the League of David or Davidsbündler, which was entirely the creation of Schumann's fantasy, "a conspiracy of himself alone," as Balanchine put it in the Kisselgoff interview, to fight the philistines of his day. These are represented on stage, during the nightmare solo danced by the Schumann figure, as five figures in massive top hats and cloaks, completely shrouded in black, holding huge quill pens. Not merely Schumann's critics but all his enemies, these are "the other side," including his father-in-law, and at one point, before it proved technically unfeasible, the ballet was to end with a huge flood: "I always like to get rid of those dark people who don't understand anything," Balanchine charmingly admitted. Most of the 18 pieces of the *Dance of the League of David* are marked by the composer with an E or an F, a few with both letters, referring to the contrasting alter egos in the League, Florestan, passionate and exultant, and Eusebius, lyrical and contemplative. The music is brilliantly played by Gordon Boelzner, sitting at the piano on stage, dressed in formal black attire of the period, against a backdrop that might have been created by the 19th-century romantic painter of Gothic sublimity, Kaspar David Friedrich: white drapery closes off the sides of the stage at an angle, directing our attention to a

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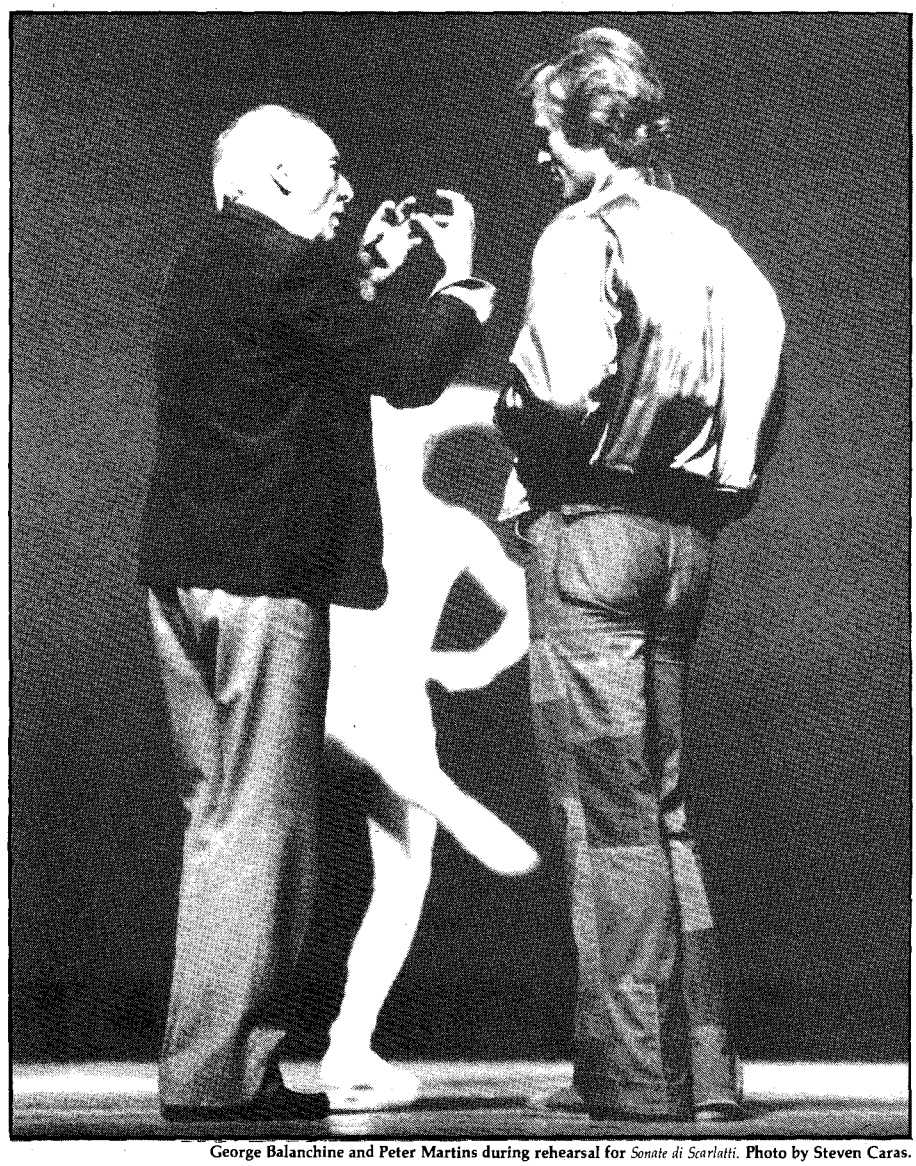
background lit by some strange mixtures of sunset and dawn, in which a blurred visionary Gothic cathedral rises out of water. Within this space of the past, there are four couples who dance in increasingly complicated sequences: Karen von Aroldingen and Adam Lüders, Ib Andersen and Kay Mazzo, Suzanne Farrell and Jacques d'Amboise, Peter Martins and Heather Watts. Lüders is meant to be an aspect of Schumann, "stranger than the rest," as Balanchine puts it; von Aroldingen might be his wife Clara; and the other couples represent alternative, happier possibilities for partnering that could have belonged at some point to Schumann's, and Clara's, imagination of their life together. But the qualities of Florestan and Eusebius belong, in varying proportions, to all four couples, and none wholly represents one side or the other.

Anyone who watches the ballet or listens to the music with these clues in mind will have about as much fun as anyone who reads *Ulysses* with Joyce's guidebook hints—that is, some but not much. Great artists need and use such schematizations or frames not to discipline the work but to release it to freer play than it could have if it had to stabilize itself at all points as it went along. Such structures are like a trampoline or an exercise bar. The ballet is exceptionally meaningful, though really no more so than, say, some of the ballets that are "about" Tchaikovsky, like *Divertimento from 'Le Baiser de la Fée'* or *Suite no. 3*, or the very early *Mozartiana*, a name for *Suite no. 4*. But whatever the ballet "means," the meaning wasn't there before it was choreographed, preexistent in some story or biography to which the dance is responsible. The movements of the four couples are dictated primarily by variations in the music and by the characteristics, both temperamental and physical, of the dancers. Balanchine's conception of these materials precedes and in fact creates the occasion for any thematic meanings the ballet might be said to develop. These have ultimately to do, I think, with the whole idea in life and in the dance of what can be called "support." With an intensity at once very poignant and very beautiful, we are shown versions of the problem, or is it the delight? the opportunity? of physically and psychologically holding up our partner or would-be partner, and of being held up or supported in return. Of course this is a kind of meaning inherent in any dance, but once again,



George Balanchine and Peter Martins during rehearsal for *Sonate di Scarlatti*. Photo by Steven Caras.

and after its glorious renditions in the Stravinsky Festival's *Violin Concerto* and *Duo Concertant*, it is revealed as a central generative force in Balanchine's imagination of himself, of his art, and of a composer who infused classical forms with intense personal emotion. The psychological ambiguities and mysteries that for Balanchine are inherent in dancing, especially in partnering, have found in Schumann's life and music analogies that are unusually direct and vivid. That is why the ballet seems so emotionally charged, even, to some viewers, overwrought.

And yet it is never possible to say of the work of a genius that it is unprecedented. The Joyce of *Portrait of the Artist* can be found in so fragile a story as "The Sisters"; the Eliot of *The Waste Land*, in his early "Preludes," and for this ballet there are preparations that may go as far back, if accounts can be depended on, as a strange piece in 1935 called *Transcendence*, which had something to do with the mesmeric appeal and technical prowess of Franz Liszt. The drama in *Davidsbündlertänze* of sexual, psychological, social support gives a retrospective enhancement to gestures in *Orpheus*, *Prodigal Son*, *Serenade*, the ball scene in *Don Quixote*, to the mysterious coda to *Divertimento from 'Le Baiser de la Fée'* and to the remarkable ballets, like *Coppélia* and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, which explore the difference between dancing with mechanical proficiency, as a doll might do, or with a heart, as a man and a woman must.

As the center of *Davidsbündlertänze* is the balletic drama of the Schumann figure, danced by Lüders, and his wife Clara, by von Aroldingen. Neither has ever danced so wonderfully. The very qualities in each to which some fans of the company have objected are here shown always to have been part of their value to Balanchine. Lüders, a remarkably able dancer, is, nonetheless, with his large body and small head, his unhappy and somewhat distraught expression on stage, like someone who

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got into dance for therapeutic reasons only to discover that he had a career on his hands; no matter what the role, he looks as if he is remembering some original and unhappy reason for being there. Of von Aroldingen it has been said that she has no transparency, that she is too much of a physical presence, a sort of aristocratic German nurse, happy in her dictatorial efficiency, and just about as stimulating to the imagination. I've always admired both of them, especially von Aroldingen, so it's pleasing that Balanchine has found a way, as he always does, to turn these very characteristics, if that is what they are, to his work's advantage. They dance together with the pathos of a couple who know that there can be no one else for either one of them, and who also know why. His arms and hands move toward clumsy touches, failed claspings, reachings out to take a wrist or an elbow when the hand of another was what he most wanted and needed to find. He can barely give her support, and she disguises this—what daring on Balanchine's part and what confidence on Lüders's!—with that precise tenderness that comes from the pain of habit. She wants to need the support he tries to offer, but we know that, really, she doesn't need it; and the fact that no one can give him the support he requires is made clear enough even before his frighteningly real "mad" solo.

Intermittently, the other couples, first one and then another, take over the stage. In the d'Amboise-Farrell sequences there are indications on his part of romantic proficiency, ever so slightly going to seed, as he reaches out for her while she moves away from him and finds his arms and head pathetically, for a second, resting on her waistline. In his always decorous and controlled anxieties, he is barely able to keep pace with Farrell's gorgeous and speedy eccentricities of movement. By contrast, Martins with Watts, Andersen with Mazzo are like two younger couples matched in will and capacity, untouched, as yet, by distress. Support is mutual between the men and the women, and it is clear that there are resources for it not even being called upon. And yet there are alarming and peculiar moments when one or another of the couples will freeze into an attitude nearly paralytic, a posture of holding in place that looks like immobility, the stasis of boredom or platitude.

Not to press the point, *Davidsbündlertänze* may have to do, finally, with the

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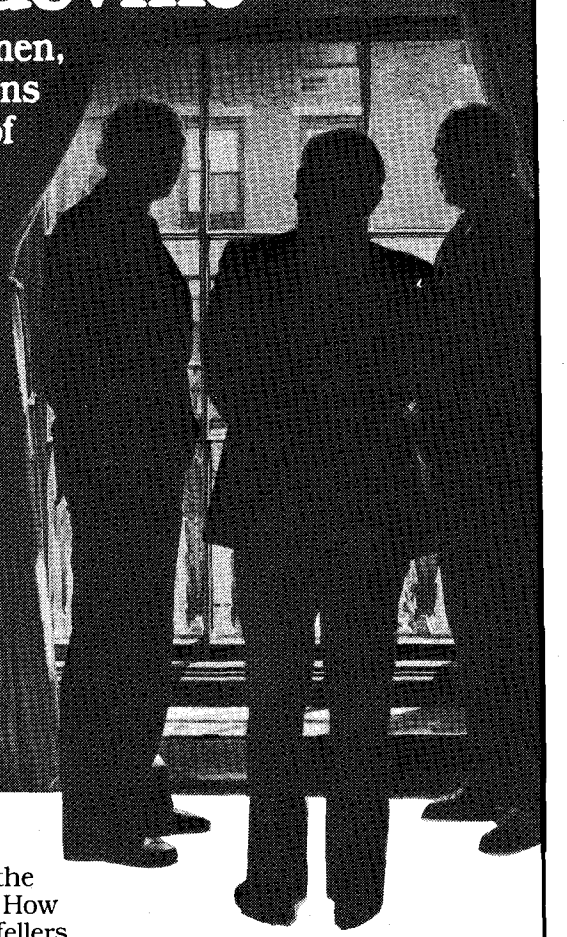

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THE AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENT

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tribulations of genius as it tries to live within the circumstances of the ordinary or the given. Lüders and von Aroldingen try to dance like Martins and Watts—they simply cannot. But then, these others, these normal couples, whatever that might mean, are as potentially disturbed. It is a work that can move you to tears because ultimately what is being asked for by the couples on stage is supposed to be so simple, so natural, and yet it is shown to be precarious for everyone, and all but unavailable to a genius like Schumann.

Balanchine is probably as powerfully involved in this music, with these dancers, and in the significances he draws from them as he has ever been in his long career, but it would be extremely misleading to take the ballet as a species of autobiographical revelation. Insofar as it is about Schumann, the ballet, within the larger Balanchinian repertoire, suggests why Balanchine can reinvest Schumann's life, even his music, with value that Schumann could not himself recover from either. Balanchine can dramatize the alienation and collapse of Schumann precisely because he is not subject to them. He has demonstrably made peace with the ordinary aspects of life, of American life in particular. To the surprise and dismay of certain admirers, he has a taste for many of the things that might be supposed to offend him, like Western dress, Western films, popular culture, "Charlie's Angels," even motel accommodations. More important, since the beginning of his life in America, he has exulted in what he takes to be its special tempo, the athleticism of long-limbed American women, the oddly unemotional quality of American dancers, including popular dancers like Ray Bolger, the jazz beat, the sense of space, and the fast movements needed to accommodate oneself to it. Even while rehearsing one of his most rigorously tempered works, *Concerto Barocco*, to Bach's *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins*, he allows the corps in the first and third movement syncopations that Edwin Denby long ago called "wonderfully American." Almost a "Charleston on pointe," said Suki Schorer, who performed the soloist role, so that "in many of my most brisk and classical movements Balanchine kept saying 'Make it jazzy.' 'Lead with the hip.' "

Balanchine is to be found, that is, only in some constellation of all his work, and especially of those movements where he appears to be an artist at once classical by choice and popular by some gregarious extension of interest, an extension that finds sustenance in the contemporary culture of his adopted country. His is a rich and complicated effort, without parallel in the history of dance. On the final evening, the Schumann had on either side older masterworks that bore subtle but characteristic testimony that Balanchine feels none of Schumann's alienation with respect to the culture within which he had done most of his lifetime of work. On the one side was *Square Dance*, to the music of Corelli and Vivaldi, in which he had heard the perfect metric for classical dance along with an opportunity to adapt to it the forms and terms, even, in its first version, the "caller" of the American square dance. On the other side was *Symphony in Three Movements* with a cast of 32 dancers moving at astonishing speeds in sometimes dangerous physical proximity to one another, and all to the music of Stravinsky wherein, again, he was able to hear an occasion for classical dance that frequently took shapes made familiar by the *Goldwyn Follies* and Broadway musical shows, for both of which Balanchine had once choreographed.

Such a conjunction of works is by no means unusual at the New York City Ballet, and it is one of the evidences, it seems to me, that the genius of Balanchine looks for parallels to the careers of Shakespeare, Mozart, or Verdi. It is common enough to call him a genius; but to put him in such company makes doing so a matter of some gravity. Because if this is praise for his accomplishments, it is also an imposition on him and on his audiences, a sort of encumbrance. It immediately makes the reception of his work a problem for those who don't expect, who even resent being asked, to give to ballet the kind of wondering, anticipatory, meticulous, even awed attention required and rewarded by any work of genius. No choreographer in history has ever created works at once so theatrically available and yet structurally so complex, so pleasing each by itself and yet offering still greater pleasure if seen within a pattern created by his now vast balletic repertoire, not counting his choreography for film and stage. Which is another way of saying that no other choreographer in history deserves to the same extent the title of genius. It's therefore no wonder that those who might want to deny him the title are often people who know a lot about ballet without knowing much about him. To be educated by other companies, even very good ones like the Royal Ballet or American Ballet Theatre or by other choreographers as remarkable as Sir Frederick Ashton or Paul Taylor or Jerome Robbins doesn't prepare anyone for what can, potentially, be seen at the New York City Ballet, any more than in the age of Elizabeth regular attendance at other theaters would prepare anyone for what was going on in Shakespeare at the Globe. In fact it could be said that people had been prepared not to see or to hear what was going on in Shakespeare even though, clearly, they were able to love whatever they did see or hear.

It is characteristic of genius that it should produce a lot of work and that the work, on reflection and in retrospect, appears to comment on itself and on its own procedures in an astonishingly complex way. Yet somehow this doesn't prevent the work from becoming popular. Peculiarly, genius traditionally exhibits not agony in production, regardless of the agony in the life,

LA FARANDOLA DEI FANCIULLI

—after Montale

How far back the ancient past seems now.
Those kids dancing around and playing,
By the railroad track, up back of the beach,
On the gravel and cinders of the railbed.

Weeds suddenly breaking into blossom
In the heat of the day, a flowering of thirst.
It's as if being naked and nameless
Was being sunlight, flower, heat-shimmer.

David Ferry

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but speed and abundance. Think of Schumann's prolific accomplishments as pianist (before his hand injury), as composer, and as writer, until he died at 46, or Shakespeare's before he died at 52. After a famously hard life, D. H. Lawrence produced enough before his death, at the ridiculous age of 45, to be recognized now as one of the indispensable literary critics of his or any time, one of the important poets of the century, a talented painter and dramatist, and a very great writer of fiction and travel. Such abundance is necessarily accompanied by complexities in the work somehow so natural and indigenous to it that they never obtrude in such a way as to offend popular taste.

Genius is seldom afraid of popularity or popular culture, nor does it condescend to either. Men and women of genius, that is, are unique in their apparent ease of production coupled with an ultimate richness that doesn't impede the immediate availability of what they produce. Genius therefore raises the issue of specialness, of the *Übermench*, even of the Muse, which can sometimes offend ordinary people. To men and women of genius the possibility that they are different from ordinary people may be offensive too, and it's almost always frightening. No one fears the potentially alienating effects of genius more than the people who have it, as Wordsworth so often assures us. Balanchine has said that "my personal life is not very interesting." Doubtless this is the case, and most surely it must seem to be the case for him. How, indeed, could anyone's perception of his own life be interesting when he is at the same time capable of perceiving and creating such life as can be found in the works I've been discussing?

The nature of Balanchine's genius can best be accounted for by the kinds of detailed, nuanced, and historically informed writings done by Arlene Croce in *Afterimages*, and by very few others. Little ground is gained by exaggerated claims that his variations on classicism constitute a repudiation of the very traditions within which he works. It is sometimes said, for example, that he has rescued classical ballet from subservience to story and plot, from those narrative conventions and motifs conspicuous in *Swan Lake* or *Giselle*. To begin with, it's inconceivable that cultured people have ever watched the great traditional classics of ballet in expectation of some point-by-point correspondence of movement to story or meaning, as if, say, a deep *plié* with one foot off the ground in *passé* position is an encoding of "meaning" or narrative, instead of something beautifully or not so beautifully executed by a dancer. This sort of crudity about classical ballet, with the assumption that it minutely enacts the stories which have in fact never been more than a pretext, has recently been decisively challenged by Marshall Cohen, but it nonetheless persists, as much among detractors of Balanchine as among defenders of his innovations. To quote a Soviet critic in *Leningradskaia Pravda* of September 30, 1972, "We were delighted by the ballet technique of the American dancers in *Violin Concerto* of Stravinsky, by their purity of movement, correct 'fifth position,' rapid gyrations . . . but it occasionally lacks that 'life of the human spirit' without which any technique grows dim." One person's "life of the human spirit" is another's soap opera, and to ask Soviet critics to conceive that certain exercises of technical brilliance may in and of themselves be an expression of the "life of the human spirit" is to expect too much. The argument over whether Balanchine has or does not have "life,"

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does or does not permit his dancers the expression of "life," is vitiated by critical and popular misconceptions not only about Balanchine's work but about the classical tradition of which he is both student and master.

Like any great artist Balanchine first of all had to be a great reader, a critical reader of that tradition. It can be said confidently that he has read the classical syllabus of dance and of music more deeply and intelligently and with a keener sense of its possible mutations than had anyone before him. And having fully possessed it he then had the freedom to condense, accelerate, distort in a way that has enriched immeasurably the vocabulary and the syntax of classical dance. Out of his incredibly varied repertoire could be fashioned a highly traditional corpus, if by that one means merely ballets that adhere to stories (*Orpheus, Prodigal Son*) or two or three act ballets (*Harlequinade, Don Quixote*) or ballets on plots central to the classical canon (*Pulcinella, The Nutcracker Suite, Coppélia*) or ballets that allow dancers a chance for individualized characterization and dramatic expression on stage, for evidence of which one need only have observed the marked differences over the years in the portrayal of Apollo by d'Amboise, Villella, Baryshnikov, Tomasson, and now Martins.

But none of this is to the point. It constitutes an unnecessarily defensive response to detractors. An innovative genius must, again, of necessity be a critic if he is also to be the savior of the traditions out of which he emerges. Balanchine may be said to have erupted into the traditions of classical dance as did Picasso into Western painting, and by so doing he has revealed the sharp and beautiful contours hidden under the slag that had accumulated on top of them. More than anyone Balanchine has allowed us to see that there really is a vital, a mythic, life in classical dance, and that it consists of more than stories and more also than techniques of movement, the "fifth position," or whatnot. The classical ballet without Balanchine would be like the novel without Joyce or Lawrence, novelists whose fiction is also a criticism and an act of devotion directed at the forms of literature that they inherit and transcend.

Forms of art, techniques of expression, are to any genius of this kind also forms of life and excite the same kind of intensity of emotion. The duet for Balanchine is an image of the opportunities, perils, difficulties, and creative glories of partnering. It is Adam and Eve, and the technique invented for the conduct of the duet represents to him some of the ways in which beings have imagined partnering and the central human myths from which it issues. To receive and to transform a tradition in the arts, to nurture it with this primitive simplicity, with what Schiller would call the naiveté of genius, is nothing less than a matter of life and death. It involves not a solemn, not even a conscious, but rather an instinctive and joyous sense of art as a corporate human enterprise. The vital transmission and variation in the codes of dance or of poetry is as natural to them, and as mysterious, as is transmission of genetic codes. In the light of which, phrases like "the human spirit" are seen to be hopelessly banal. More appropriate than "spirit" would be the word "will," the human will compelled by its creative necessities.

Genius disdains snobbishness, which is one of the havens of the talented. It wants to be lavish, it wants to be popular, it wants always to move. Balanchine preserves into this century, as did Verdi in the last, a Shakespearean velocity, range, and theatrical inclusiveness. The sumptuousness of *Jewels* with its assembled company for the concluding polonaise, the massed dancers, flags in hand, signaling the end of *Union Jack* with "God Save the Queen," in semaphore, are as joyously exuberant as is the line of 16 women at the beginning of *Symphony in Three Movements* stretched diagonally across the stage. In ponytails and glistening white leotards they move to Stravinsky's music with a jazzy, sweeping menace. The menace, which is clear from the shock tactics of the music, is meant to say something about the period in which it was written—one section was supposedly a response to newsreel footage of Nazi soldiers—but it also catches something of the frightening power that we recognize on the spot as a suppressed reaction we might always have had to the large, powerfully coordinated female chorus lines of the 1930s and 1940s. In each of these works there are also invoked the idioms of popular dance and popular music: by the emulation of street-gang mannerisms and music show-dancing of the 1930s in the "Rubies" section of *Jewels*, with its jaunty sexuality and muscular flaunting, and in *Union Jack*, by the Scottish folk dance, military marches, and English music hall turns first seen by Balanchine when he lived intermittent-

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ly in London from 1929 to 1933.

Balanchine is a classic American genius because he wants to make it "new" while knowing, as some adherents of that phrase do not, that inherent in its very grammar is a paradox not to be evaded. The "it" already exists or we wouldn't be able to refer to "it." If "it" did not exist in some previously given form, we wouldn't be able to see "it," hear "it," or make "it" at all. The injunction can only mean that the artist must try to reveal possibilities in language or dance movement or nature that were already there even if not heretofore visible. The illusion that it is possible to make a new thing, or even to disengage a thing from earlier usage, always begins with an assertion that the past can be evaporated by fiat. "A rose is a rose is a rose" is charming needlepoint but a totally dizzy proposition by which Gertrude Stein hoped to restore roses to a reality long ago encrusted by poetic associations. Of course there are no such things as roses until we so name them. Their reality depends upon some sort of poetic impulse to begin with; and it is an amusing indication of the impossibility, not to mention the undesirability, of splitting off things, or one's self, from the past that Stein apparently didn't know that she was doing little more than repeating Emerson's "Self Reliance": "These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are. There is simply the rose."

The American, by which I specifically mean the Emersonian, genius, of which Balanchine is an example, feels no less enlivened by an artistic than by a biological inheritance; in either case he or she is compelled to an emulative creativity, convinced that what is created will somehow represent the fact that the material and historical conditions impinging on the work are importantly different from any that existed before. A genius doesn't choose to imitate any more than he would choose to deny the past; he recognizes that he is himself at once an inescapable and inimitable creation of it. He creates without ego, and for the reason that he knows that whatever genius he may have is a mysteriously, perhaps even accidently, transmitted gift. Creation is all at once a gesture of gratitude and a gesture of competition. And it needn't at all involve anxiety or usurpation with respect to any precursor, as it must in the important proposals made by Harold Bloom. Balanchine is without anxiety as a creator because he always satisfies himself that his creative will is at work within a cultural situation markedly unlike any encountered by his classical predecessors. The results therefore are going to be different in the very nature of things. Balanchine made the decision to wed himself to America in 1933, to create in America a classical ballet company using American dancers, and whatever else America might throw his way. But it was not his decision alone. It might never have been made without the initiative of Lincoln Kirstein, who can be thanked for bringing him here. It was Kirstein who first conceived the idea, against the taunts of Tchelitchev, who thought ballet by that time had ceased to be in any way tied to a country. Dismissing the compromise of importing a European company, Kirstein and Balanchine created what is now the New York City Ballet with the clear determination that it should be an American ballet. One of the richest bequests of European court culture was thus to become naturalized.

America gave Balanchine the opportunity to discover a European musical

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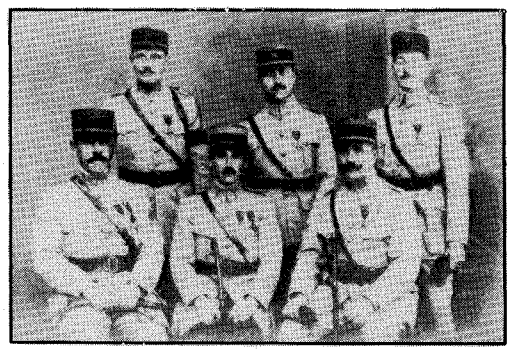

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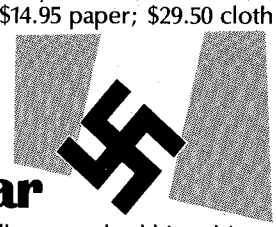

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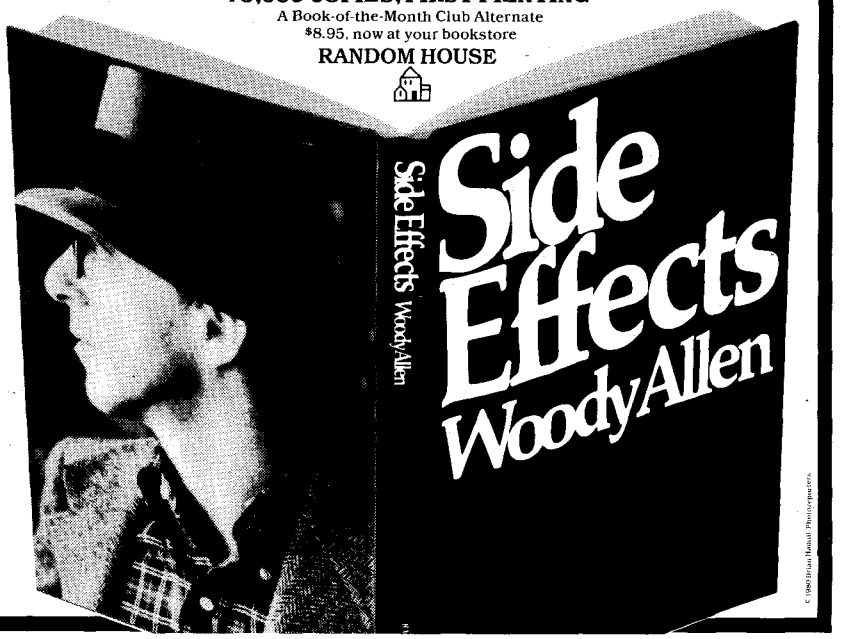

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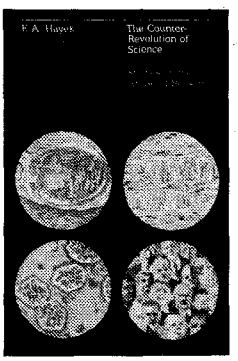

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and dance heritage not many Europeans even now can recognize as their own. Being the most musically trained of all choreographers, with the capacities to be a professional pianist and conductor, he found choreographic possibilities in music that no one even thought to look for. And also being the most heterosexually vibrant of choreographers, he is astonishingly intuitive about the resources locked into the bodies of particular dancers, especially the American women whose shape pleased him from the beginning. A few years ago, speaking to the National Press Club in Washington, he described with affectionate amusement the kind of women dancers he knew in Russia, with their "little feet, little hands, little necks—like brioche."

It could therefore be said that he doesn't really invent at all, but only discovers. In a metaphysical sense this is true, but so is nearly anything else. Besides, it is true of any genius. A great poet doesn't invent a language; he finds under the pressures of historical needs and opportunities combinations and rhythms that are both latent and original. "Language is fossil poetry," Emerson said, implying that the poetry existed before it gave shape to the words we commonly use. The words refer us to a prior impulse, and it is that impulse, in a most radical sense, that constitutes the vitality of tradition. So, too, with music before notation, with dance before choreography. A work of art is not a monument, not an invitation to reverence; it is an inducement to some equivalent work, on our part, of combination, imagination, recognition. Nearly always, however, a large segment of Balanchine's audience idealizes itself as a cultural elite. Probably they are, but the self-consciousness makes them far more aloof and fastidious than their master. Few of them would be capable of the imaginative leap downward from the Stravinsky Festival of 1972 to an emphatically and delightfully eccentric piece like *Variations Pour Une Porte Et Un Soupir* in which to Pierre Henry's *musique concrète* of recorded sounds, creakings and sighings, von Aroldingen, assisted by a wind machine and pulleys, maneuvered a black gown so vast it covered the stage and the walls, while John Clifford writhed, flopped, rolled in front of and eventually through her.

Perhaps, as I suspect, the piece was meant as a teasing communication from Balanchine to the woman he once called his muse, Suzanne Farrell, then in exile

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with Ballet of the 20th Century, the company of Maurice Béjart, who had incidentally choreographed to the same music. It was, as it were, a sample of how easily Balanchine could do Béjart's sort of thing, a reminder, in fact, that he had already done something like it decades ago in *Errante*. It was outrageous and funny and extravagant, the show biz side of Balanchine unleashed. Above all it was evidence, if any were needed, that he is so little afraid of being taken for vulgar that when someone dismissed the piece with that word, one of his closest associates could reply, in my hearing, by pleasantly agreeing: "Of course it's vulgar. He is the Prince of Vulgarity!" Votaries of Balanchine aren't usually capable of that reaction. But since his company is nearly, for them, the last refuge of art and since his vulgarity is not new—wasn't his second ballet in America, *Alma Mater*, about a football hero and a coed?—they let him have his way and make their way to the lobby even when *Western Symphony* or *Who Cares?* is scheduled.

As I've been intimating, one of the most significant aspects of Balanchine's genius is his relaxed insistence that he is free to be a popular entertainer, to experiment with any kind of material, and to do so not only when, as in the past, he worked in film or in show business, but specifically when he is being a classical choreographer within the repertoire of the New York City Ballet and in the French and Russian traditions.

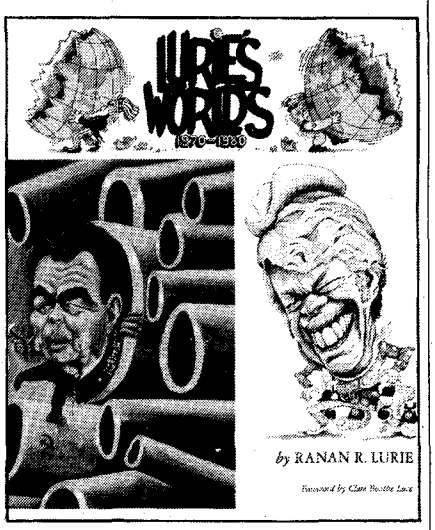
Peculiarly, the characteristic clue to defensiveness about popularity or popular culture, when it besets a repertory company, is not the exclusion of certain materials, but rather the segregation of them within a program, along with a kind of idiotic determination that the classical numbers shall be totally cleansed of any contaminations having to do with sex or show biz. Some time ago, for example, I wrote about the Joffrey Ballet, which to its credit does some Balanchine, and more Ashton than any company in the world except the Royal Ballet, but which lamentably decided to offer the following program: their own version of classical dance, Joffrey's *Remembrances* (a stuffily dressed, badly danced, tedious, and elevated piece about Wagner), a second piece that would have gone nicely in *Oh! Calcutta!* (and was choreographed by Margot Sappington, who had done some work on that musical), and a Big Think mythologizing ballet by Gerald Arpino called *Relativity of Icarus*. The latter was said to be about the journey of escape each of us tries to make from paternal and earth dominated existence—I paraphrase—but it obviously had far less to do with the Cretan labyrinth than with a hot scene in a gay bath. A little something for everyone. It's a bit unfair to compare a Joffrey *mélange* to the Balanchine repertoire, but I do so to make the point that with the latter no such segregation of material or of effects is possible. The erotic, the mythic, the classical, and the jazzy are all inextricably mixed in any single piece, and in the interests of a total design that prevents us from separating out any of the elements.

For example, a program that brings together *Serenade*, to Tchaikovsky's *Serenade in C*, *Apollo*, to Stravinsky's score, and *Who Cares?*, to some songs of Gershwin, would seem structurally no different from the Joffrey program: a sedately classical, a mythic, and a show biz number. And since I'm arguing that an enterprise like Balanchine's is not afraid of anything, let it be conceded that Balanchine and Kirstein are influenced no less than is Joffrey by the simple desire to have what is known as a balanced program. What is markedly different is that to schedule together any three works by a man or a woman of genius is automatically to create without willing, intending, or even expecting it, a marvelous kind of echo chamber, flashes of similarity, reflection, reverberation, and allusion that pass from one work into another, until it seems as if every so often they all share some hidden, barely articulated community of meaning. Repetition within a field that includes works of enormous variety and dissimilarity is a natural expression of the obsessive nature of genius, its indefatigable interest in what it is about or compelled to be about. Genius is always to some extent mystified by its own workings because the mystery resides at last and utterly in the basic, elemental, and resistant materiality of the art itself, be it words or paint or, as here, the materiality of a musical score, of bodies, of the traditional codes of dance, even the very curriculum of the school of dance.

So when the curtain rises on *Serenade* and reveals a line of girls poised, with a kind of sequestered simplicity, in the first position, anyone may recognize an allusion to a class recital about to begin, a demonstration of newly acquired competence, and it's especially beautiful if you happen to know that this ballet, the

"The enemy is political ignorance"

—Ranan R. Lurie



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first work by Balanchine after he came to America, actually originated quite casually one day in 1934 with his first group of American students in Hartford, Connecticut. He began with the 17 girls, still the same number that we now see, who happened to be there. Their initial position signals their basic commitment to classical dance, and as they peel off the line into further movement they discover—and it is of course Balanchine who is himself once again discovering as he creates—what that commitment entails. Because of the evident modesty of the group, the simplicity of dress, and the bareness of the surroundings, there is something tender, poignant, and eventually even frightening in the gradually accumulating demands to which the dancers are exposed. There are demands on the body which make one of them fall, or momentarily collapse. There are demands on the ego. Though some are given solos, no one of the aspirants is allowed to emerge as the star. It is a way of suggesting that everyone is to learn the difficulty of moving so as to express not the self, but the whole work, the music, the other dancers. And there are finally the demands on the emotions as dancers discover possibilities of meaning and story in the music and in their movements to it.

Balanchine is teaching them, himself, and us that in response to the vibrant surgings and recessions of Tchaikovsky, the pirouettes, the adagio movements, the duets will for brief moments reveal glimpses, fragments, shadows of old stories and themes, of significances already credited to these dance movements by the great ballets of the past, long before these young women, and the few young men who join them—including the increasingly impressive Joseph Duell—decided on a career in dancing. There are only fleeting, fractured hints of stories that of course do not even need to unfold here and now; they have already been unfolded, already belong to us. But they are also left in gestural code because Balanchine wants to say that whatever the feelings generated by these movements, whatever sad or happy story they encapsulate, the choreography is not obligated to the externality of a story line or a line of feeling. It is instead always responsive to the line of bodies and the phrases of music in all their volatility. Gestures of youthful delight and the discovery of physical power and beauty, responses to the shock of the unexpected, the recognition of love, separation, chance, and fate, these are momentary possibilities only. As when, reclining on her right arm and looking back at a man standing, bending slightly over her, his arms stretched out and curved forward in a prelude to an embrace that is never completed, the young woman on the floor also sees directly behind him the figure of another woman, her arms similarly arched—is she seeing behind her potential lover a guardian angel? a figure of parental restraint? a competitor? dark possessiveness? Phrasings from *Giselle*, from Petipa's *Swan Lake*, from *Sleeping Beauty* suggest themselves and then dissolve into the larger, central narrative of the work. And that, again, has to do, radically, with the marvelous, frightening, demanding acquisition of an inheritance and of the physical and emotional power to deserve it and to renew it.

Serenade is a signature work of Balanchine's, a dramatization of what he was to make of classical dance, as well as classical dancers, in America. It is as inquisitive about the mythologies of classical dance as is the earlier and directly mythological *Apollo*. With Peter Martins as Apollo this past season, Suzanne Farrell was Terpsichore, the muse of dance. It is she, in a seeming quotation from Michelangelo's fresco where God touches the finger of Adam, who touches Apollo's finger and signals the beginning of dance, especially of duet when a man discovers in his movement with a woman not only a new kind of pleasure but a new infusion of power that submits, nonetheless, to the civilizing influence of music. In *Serenade*, Balanchine indicates in the provenance of the ordinary—a classroom recital situation—some of the mythologies inherent in classical dance movement; in *Apollo*, to the quite different measure of Stravinsky, he proposes that direct mythological representation has to include the clumsily human, the ordinary, which, by tradition, belongs to mythology. As if to emphasize this admixture he has, over the years, progressively simplified the dress of the God and the Muses, and removed the trappings, including the stairs on which Apollo used to ascend, bathed in light. But even when the ballet was first conceived, according to an earlier Terpsichore, Marie-Jeanne, "He wanted an unformed, unmajestic Apollo." "You are," he told Lew Christensen, the first American in the role, "a woodcutter, a swimmer, a football player, a god." Balanchine thereby reveals a more learned and sophisticated awareness of Greek myth, where being a god meant also being a shepherd, warrior, or swimmer, than did those critics who well into the 1950s objected to what they considered the ballet's sometimes indecorously casual or graceless movements.

It is the first of the three ballets on which Stravinsky and Balanchine directly and minutely collaborated. The music offers exciting and strenuous opportunities for intentionally awkward movements, for steps that remain unfinished, all of which contribute to the characterization of a god who is nonetheless still in the process of discovering that he is one, while also learning to cope with his bodily shape. Apollo isn't the ballet, however, but only a figure in it, and what the ballet itself means to express is that within the nobility of classical dance, what Stravinsky himself has called "the beauty of its *ordonnance* and the aristocratic austerity of its form," there can be articulated an idiomatic bodily vocabulary not before included in the classical dictionary. Dancers appear to shuffle, the legs turn in, and as Danilova of the original cast remarked, "sometimes instead of going on the toes you went on the full feet . . . everything was new." It looked new once again this past season, partly because it has been stripped down still further by Balanchine, who omits the prologue as well as the final ascent, partly because of such freshness as is brought by Kyra Nichols, in her role as Polyhymnia, and especially because of the dispassionate, the elegant mastery of Farrell and Martins in the *pas de deux*. They are particularly suited to this duet because each finds in the other a partner of such strength and resourcefulness that they can move with some grand mixture of confidence, competitiveness, respect, and, on Martins's part, a cool wariness of Farrell's extraordinarily powerful independence of movement.

It also looked new, as if it had been more recently conceived, because of its proximity on the program to *Who Cares?*, a work which invigorated several of the evenings. It's frequently been noted that Balanchine's choreography to 17 of Gershwin's songs, including "Fascinatin' Rhythm," "'S Marvelous," "The Man I Love," and "I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise," alludes to *Apollo* and other classical precedents, as one way of cele-

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brating the claim that for all its jazz rhythms *Who Cares?* is still a classical ballet in the incontrovertibly crisp American mode. "Dry, frank, refreshing, not syruped by nostalgia," to recall what Kirstein says of the music, the Gershwin tunes make us, as a classic should, anxious not to recapture the period in which they were written but to find some equivalent to it in our own. The second half, for instance, with d'Amboise and an incomparable trio of Patricia McBride, Merrill Ashley, and Wilhelmina Frankfurt, has some of the same configurations and sequences as *Apollo*, where the god, like his Manhattan counterpart, watches each of the three women dance solo, then has a duet with each of them, and then dances with all three at once, in configurations that remind us of the earlier ballet. Balanchine intends more than merely choreographic quotation, however, and the similarity between the two works is a way of pointing to the echoes of Stravinsky's music that he has been able to hear in Gershwin's. Balanchine loves to do this sort of thing, as when he makes a concluding duet in *Symphony in Three Movements*, superbly danced this season by Bart Cook and Heather Watts, an imitation close to parody of the "Dance Maroc" in *Don Quixote*, to the music of Nicholas Nabokov. I half suspect he is slyly directing our attention to Nabokov's unmodified borrowings from Stravinsky—and others. Balanchine guards the Stravinsky musical heritage and can track the movements of any of its beneficiaries. Thus, when he quotes a dance movement from *Apollo* in *Who Cares?*, he asks us to visualize not only a connection between the two ballets; he also asks us to hear "how comradely the links are," as Arlene Croce puts it, "between the Gershwin of 'Lady Be Good,' 'Tip-Toes,' 'Oh Kay!' and 'Funny Face'"—not all of which are included in *Who Cares?*—"and the syncopated Stravinsky of *Apollon Musagète*."

Allusions and cross references can be merely cute when they do not allow some larger inference. And what they allow us to infer, as they play across a configuration of *Serenade*, *Apollo*, and *Who Cares?*, is nothing less than the American aspects of Balanchine's genius. These echoes, and one could locate equivalents of them almost anywhere in his work, conspire to suggest that there are essential connections between classic myth and those mythic evidences that emerge in a classroom recital in Hartford or a ballroom theatrical dance in Manhattan, connections between soft shoe and dancing on points, betwen jazz and classical phrasing both in music and in dance. Balanchine affirms, as have the great classic writers in America, that the classic can be inferred from the vernacular, the vernacular from the classic. To see and hear this demonstrated with such authority and delight at the New York State Theater—and right now at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC—is to witness a veritable act of democratic civilization not likely to be found anywhere else.

Empire as a Way of Life
by William Appleman Williams

(Oxford University Press; $14.95)

The history of imperialism is the history of its rhetoric. From the beginning of their history the people of the United States and their leaders were often inclined to expansion, the justifications of which resided in patriotic and moralistic phrases that their public speakers kept repeating to the people in order to make them feel good. Certain historians, in retrospect, performed the often overdue duty of pointing out the mixed motives and unclear purposes of certain chapters of American territorial aggrandizement and of intervention abroad. Few of them were able to present a balanced picture when their vision was not sufficient to range beyond the concerns of their day. Many of the revisionists of the 1960s were primitive examples of this: at the cost of all kinds of falsifications, and more often than not in the service of their own intellectual opportunism, they would simply project their then present opinions on the Vietnam War onto the past, applying them to the historical origins of the cold war. In the early 1930s Walter Millis began his monumental *The Road to War*, an eloquent and comprehensive account of Wilson's interventionism and of British propaganda during World War I. The book was published in 1937, at the height of the democratic and populist reaction against World War I, and became a best seller. Yet Millis was disturbed by the protracted influence of his book, since less than two years after its publication he had come to believe that American intervention on the side of Britain against Hitler was a necessity. He, at least, was an honest man.

To write about national expansion is both easy and difficult. It is easy because the evidences are there for anyone to see, save for those who close their eyes because of their nationalistic piety or hypocrisy. It is difficult because, let us face it, every great nation became great because of its conquests, often at the expense of other peoples. This fact must be recognized, but it does not amount to an enduring trait of national character. Professional intellectuals will often chastise the character of their nation without recognizing that their profitable occupations have been made possible by the existing power and prosperity of their country. They are reminiscent of someone who publicly

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thanks God for his existence as a preacher of sexual abstinence, while forgetting how his father and mother produced him.

In one of his paradoxical essays Oscar Wilde suggested that *The Decay of Lying* is actually the result of the decay of truth: "everybody who is incapable of learning had taken to teaching—that is really what our enthusiasm for education has come to." In 1959 William Appleman Williams published an artless book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, which was wrong in many details but at least it was something out of the ordinary in 1959, when the fact—and it was a fact—of a new kind of American imperialism was not recognized even by American liberals and radicals, a condition of which this reviewer's own experiences amply attest. Now, more than 20 years later, comes Williams's *Empire as a Way of Life*. He has learned nothing, and forgotten everything. Truth has further decayed, and lying has become worse. Empire has become Williams's way of life, his profession, his capital, his bag. Because of my 1959 memories I approached this book with certain doubts in my mind but with no particular prejudice against its author. Now I am compelled to state that Williams is no American idealist but a vulgarian and a pedant.

The vulgarity of Williams's mind runs through this grandiloquent book, but it appears most clearly in his pop-confessional conclusion. He is compelled to tell us that he was born in 1921, that he was brought up to believe in The American Way of Life, and that once he stole a knife from a hardware store. His maternal grandmother, Maude Hammond Appleman, found him out and told him to return it to the store. After some painful hesitation the boy obeyed his grandmother (he calls her "Maude," which is peculiar enough, but let this pass), and took the knife back to the store where he was duly praised by the owner. What this has to do with American imperialism is difficult to gauge. (After all, the owner of that hardware store was not an Indian.) It seems that in the 1920s American kids were afraid of their grandmothers and American imperialism was popular. Now the grandmothers are afraid of the kids and anti-imperialism is popular. There must be a moral in this somewhere.

Now let us go from the very end to the very beginning. This William Appleman Williams (what a name! an American mouthful, and suitable for an abbreviation, like USA: WAW) grew up to be an American professor, a pedant. It is all there in the first paragraph of the introduction:

> In order to think seriously about empire as a way of life, we must first choose a strategy of inquiry that is appropriate to the subject. Then we must define the basic terms involved, and outline the process whereby the different elements of society are integrated into an overall outlook and culture. [The class goes to sleep.]

The pages that follow are reminiscent of Dickens's immortal Mr. Gradgrind who began his class by hectoring the students: "Define A Horse." Fortunately—or unfortunately—Williams's pedantry consists of short bursts; his natural vulgarity will prevail, because it must. The title of his next chapter reads: "A Psychologically Justifying and Economically Profitable Fairy Tale: The Myth of Empty Continents Dotted Here and There with the Mud Huts, the Lean-tos, and the Tepees of Unruly Children Playing at Culture." WAW. WOW.

He is not a simple pedant. If the history of imperialism—or, at that, of every idea—is the history of its rhetoric, then the mark of the hopeless historian is his hopeless rhetoric. He will, on occasion, jargonize, using words and terms such as "self-legitimatizing dynamism," "encapsulate," "reification"—but, I repeat, his vulgarity (and what is worse, his *imprecise* vulgarity) will win out. The slogan of Manifest Destiny "was a mash that produced a 200-proof imperial snort." In the Navy in the 1920s "astute admirals . . . leapfrogged into new electric power systems." In 1950 Herbert Hoover "had no chance. He was in the position of a father of the 1960s trying to persuade his children that the jazz of the 1920s and 1930s was worth a good listen and a good boogie."

There is worse to come. This eminent scholar, the president of the Organization of American Historians, the dean of revisionists, the recent James Pinckney Harrison Distinguished Visiting Professor at the College of William and Mary is not merely a shallow vulgarian and self-righteous pedant and a singleminded idea-monger. He reveals a lack of knowledge of American history, of his very discipline, to an extent which in former times would have debarred him from the lectern of any reputable institution of higher learning. He battens on a quotation from Dwight Morrow, which he uses repeatedly, whereafter he writes that Dwight Morrow "died soon after speaking that wisdom. Hence no one will ever know how he would have responded to the subsequent 1929 crisis of the American political economy." For "no one" read the president of the Organization of American Historians. Some of us happen to know that Dwight Morrow died in October 1931, two years after the 1929 crisis, about which he had spoken and written plenty. Here are a few other examples:

> [In the sixteenth century] came the first Spanish and French, followed by the fleets of fishermen to the northern and the early colonies that failed to survive. The coughs, the sneezes, and the laying on of hands were like the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

> The United States undertook to liberate North Korea by conquest and integrate it into the American Empire.

> The world looked relatively manageable in late summer 1949. The United States had won in Iran, the Soviets in Czechoslovakia. . . . Mao immediately asked to open serious discussions with the United States.

> While the Russians lost 20 million lives, for example, the United States created 17 million new jobs safe from bombs and bullets. These workers, including large numbers of women and teenagers—even some blacks and browns—sometimes had trouble finding places to live or other substantial ways to invest their money. As a result, the entertainment industry boomed. [A capsule summary of World War II.]

> [Around 1900 the American] policeman became ever more energetic in whacking the skulls of strikers and blacks at home, as well as thumping feisty natives abroad.

"Prior to the appearance of the Europeans there were probably between 10 and 12 million people living north of the Rio Grande River." Scholarly estimates are around one million, including Canada. In 1827 in Greece (yet another example of brute American interventionism) American "landing parties hunted pirates on the islands of Argenteire, Miconi, and Androsa." There are no islands by such names in Greece or, indeed, anywhere else. All of which tells us something of the Organization of American Historians, of the editors of the Oxford University Press (founded in 1478 and now at the sorry end of the Modern Age), and of the present state of professional historianship in the United States.

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We are now coming to the essence of the matter. The ignorance of William Appleman Williams is very great. Some of it is, of course, the result of his single-mindedness. He will take any kind of evidence, from anywhere, and tape it together to illustrate his thesis, which is that Americans are obsessed with empire. To show support for his thesis he will cite, for example, a political commentator, a publisher's entrepreneur, an Australian rancher, and the Singapore minister for foreign affairs. This is a treatment of sources which in a genteel era cluck-clucking scholars used to dismiss as "cavalier" whereas it is, in reality, undiscriminating, ham-handed, sweaty, and breathless—and therefore, more than often, not only thematically but factually imprecise and wrong.

And what is the source of this kind of ignorance? Is it, simply and squarely, lack of knowledge, Williams not having done his homework? No, this kind of ignorance is not merely the result of insufficient brain-power. It suggests an insufficiency of self-knowledge. This statement is not the result of facile psychologizing. Its evidences are suggested by WAW himself, who makes—and not merely allows—his personality to intrude in his thesis-book again and again. At the end of his book he lists, and praises, famous Americans, men and women who at some time or other became anti-imperialists.

> It works, it happens, down the line. I live in a non-academic community. You have to earn your way in. My way is pool. I like the game and play it well. Professors playing pool with loggers and truck drivers and gippo fishermen properly go through an apprenticeship. You beat us at our game and we will try your game. Now my game at pool is to play the capitalist machine tables in such a way as most nearly to duplicate the real game of pool. No slop, no ball counts. You call your shots and bank the Eight Ball. The fascinating thing is that people like to be challenged to play the best they can in the most difficult circumstances. *They like the tough game.* [His italics.]

And this is where we are in the relationship between empire and democracy. . . .

What does this have to do with empire and democracy? In any event, *le style c'est l'homme*. The earthy populist and the sensitive anti-imperialist, the professor among the truck drivers: his self-portrait is no more convincing than is his scholarship. It suggests that his "tough" game is only dirty pool.

John Lukacs

John Lukacs is the author of *The Last European War* and *1945: Year Zero* (Doubleday). His *Patricians and Philistines* will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux next spring.

Man: The Promising Primate
by Peter J. Wilson

(Yale University Press; $12.95)

This book is in the happy tradition of philosophical anthropology that burned so brightly during the 18th and 19th centuries, but that was almost smothered by the rise of a scientific theory of evolution and an even more rigorous empirical natural history. Observation, experiment, and classification were in, and "speculation" was out.

Fortunately, things have changed in recent years and anthropologists no longer fear to speculate. Peter Wilson's *Man: The Promising Primate* will help rekindle the bright flame of philosophical anthropology, for he has written an uncommonly stimulating book in the great tradition of Hobbes, Monboddo, Kames, Hutcheson, Hume, Ferguson, and Rousseau. Wilson writes with precision, clarity, and authority. He is an anthropologist—he teaches at the University of Otago in New Zealand—who has worked in the field and read widely and deeply. In his preface he claims to do no more than serve as a guide and provide faint boundaries for a purely speculative argument. His book speculates not so much upon the origins of human society and culture as upon the conditions that made such origins and their development possible. What he sets out to do in this book is to unravel the evidence for such basic human adaptations as self-conscious thought, symbolic kinship, ritual behavior, objective reasoning, and all those other sociocultural traits that are uniquely human, and by so doing to challenge the current emphasis on biogenetic determinism and provide a new approach to anthropological theorizing.

Wilson writes from the point of view of a social anthropologist. He has, however, the necessary grasp of the biological facts to make his argument meaningful, and it is this combination that makes him an effective critic of the reductionist position represented by the sociobiologists. What sociobiologists claim is that human social behavior is to a large extent genetically determined; that, indeed, unless we understand "the large hereditary component" determining human behavior, as Edward O. Wilson has said, "we cannot understand the basics of human behavior and the fundamental rules that govern our potential." The reductionism of Wilson's "basics" simply won't do, for, among other things, it is based on "old hat" genetics and misinterpretation. Biological reductionism clearly is not going to solve problems of sociocultural phenomena.

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Reductionism, as Peter Wilson says, is neither an independent nor a sufficient answer to such subjective questions as why human beings think it is important to try to cure each other, feed each other, or brainwash each other. "Organisms," he writes, "are not reduced to genes, it is *we* who reduce organisms to genes." While genetic factors may account for potentialities and limits, Wilson argues, the actual evolution of a species, and especially the human species, can be understood only in relation to the changing conditions of its environment. Humans are the most generalized of primates, of endless potential; the most promising of primates, with a need to exchange promises, from which emerge kinship systems, society, and culture.

Wilson's view of the "promise" resembles a modern version of Rousseau's "social contract." He argues in support of his view, however, very much more incisively and compellingly than Rousseau, writing at the disadvantage of time and paucity of information, was able to do. Robert Ardrey in recent years revived the idea of "the social contract" in a book of that title, but compromised it by an extreme biologistic bias. Wilson successfully avoids that trap by showing that while human potentialities make possible their own emergence, it was the conditions of life in which humans lived that rendered inevitable the institutions of human culture, the emergence out of pair bonds founded on sex, and primary bonds founded on nurturance, of a promising situation, a possibility.

The promise awaited realization, and early man transformed it into a reality. Such creativity involves a skill by which the individual "can remake himself and others . . . by refashioning his idea of himself." The final tool necessary in this process Wilson calls the "promise." The individual comes to know his "self" only through his relation to others. The individual's willingness to share himself with others so that he and they may achieve their own sense of self, their own integration, depends "on the understanding" that in multiple and various relationships, "promises" among individuals be allowed to coexist.

Wilson makes it incontrovertibly clear that pair-bonding in itself provides the immediate conditions for the possibility of the social recognition of the father. No knowledge whatsoever of the connection between intercourse and childbirth is necessary for the recognition of such a relationship; all that is required is the permanent bonding of a male and a female. The children born to the female may then relate to her mate as their father simply because he is the "husband" of their "mother." As Wilson says, "The male's identity as father relies on the female not only logically and structurally but also emotionally." "Human culture, particularly as social organization in general and kinship in particular, only comes into being when the adult male is transformed into a social father."

What Wilson fails to note is that in some cultures, as among some Australian aboriginal peoples, as well as in pre-Helladic Greece, the mother's role was also considered to be exclusively tangential rather than tangenital, a kind of incubator, but not a genitor. Male cultural dominance appears to be a function of male vulnerability, which must be protected and enforced. There is much evidence that in most, if not in all, cultures males remain emotionally more dependent on women than the latter do on males. Wilson has not found it necessary to discuss this interesting point.

The truth is that all classificatory, kinship relationships are social, even when they may be based on fully understood biological relationships. Certainly the predominating factor in determining kinship relations is not biology but sociology. Even among ourselves, the parents of a child are considered to be those who have parented it, not its non-parenting biological genitors. It would be a great help if the distinction between "genitor" and "parent" were clearly understood.

Wilson considers that the major subjective problem for the genus, and particularly for *Homo sapiens*, was to organize reproduction and hence human social life. This is so, he asserts, because evolution classically emphasizes the survival of the fittest. Perhaps it ought to be said here that what may be "classically" emphasized is not necessarily true. "The survival of the fittest" is a cliché left over from the period of muscular Darwinism. It is not the "fittest" who contribute most to the gene pool but the "fit," the adaptively generalized, the flexible. The "fittest" are likely to be handicapped by lack of flexibility, to be too specialized to meet the rapidly changing conditions by which they may be challenged. "The human problem in the beginning," as Wilson says, "was ensuring not so much physical reproduction as the survival of those born by effective nurturance." In other words, not of the "fittest" but of the fetus—for the human fetus is born only half-gestated and requires a great deal of care.

It is no longer sufficient to say that one is writing as a social anthropologist when considering human evolution, since biological factors have played an important role in influencing the development of humankind's social behavior. Wilson is aware of this, but not as fully as he might have been. While his sources are quite adequate to his argument, it is to be regretted that he seems to have missed so much of the biological literature that would have rendered his case even more forceful than it is. Still, his book is full of original ideas and valuable insights. Moreover, it constitutes one of the best correctives to the sociobiological dogma that has appeared in recent years.

Ashley Montagu

Ashley Montagu is an anthropologist. His most recently published book (of which he is editor) is *Sociobiology Examined* (Oxford University Press).

Nightfrost in Prague
by Zdenek Mlynar
translated by Paul Wilson

(Karz Publishers; $16.95)

It's not often that we are offered an authoritative insider's glimpse of the operations of any East European communist leadership, much less the workings of such a leadership under crisis conditions. And in a time of crisis in Eastern Europe, with the leadership of the Soviet Union's largest ally, Poland,

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under repeated challenge, such an insider's glimpse of the decision-making process of the Kremlin leadership is an invaluable handbook for Western decision-makers. True, there was Khrushchev's reputed autobiography; Anastas Mikoyan published a rather lifeless and unrevealing account of a small portion of his career; more recently there were the diaries of Veljko Mičunović, Tito's ambassador to Moscow during the same Khrushchev years. But there, for the most part, the string winds itself out. For the Brezhnev era there has been only silence across Eastern Europe.

Now, from the perspective of a once convinced, though perhaps now sadly disillusioned, Communist, we have an extraordinary glimpse of one of the few potentially mortal crises that have faced the communist world in the years since World War II—the crisis of the Prague Spring of 1968.

Zdenek Mlynar was for a considerable time in a prime position to watch these events unfold. Beginning in April 1968 he was a member of the inner, ruling elite—a secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia—although for months prior to his formal appointment he was a leading confidante of Alexander Dubček, the first secretary of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia. If Dubček was the architect of the Prague Spring, then Mlynar was the general contractor.

Nightfrost in Prague is a remarkable saga of how a small group of fundamentally well-intentioned but finally ineffectual men struggled against a power none of them fully comprehended to carry off a revolution that we see in retrospect was doomed from the start. It is not, of course, a unique story. We have more comprehensive accounts of this period from scholars such as Professor Gordon Skilling, more colorful eyewitness versions from journalists such as Tad Szulc. But never, in the history of communist Eastern Europe, have we had vignettes from the innermost reaches of the Soviet and Czechoslovak politburos: the taste and smell of fear as the special paratroopers of the Kremlin elite guard came bursting into the Central Committee building in Prague, putting an end to the entire Czech "experiment." An arrogant and self-important little colonel, commanding a squadron of the machine-gun-wielding red berets swaggered into Dubček's office, and, as Mlynar describes, "roared out: 'No talking! Sit quietly! No talking Czech!"

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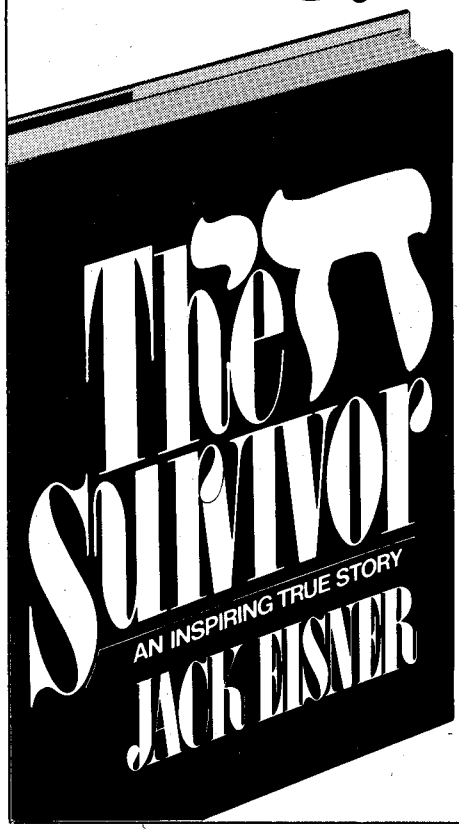

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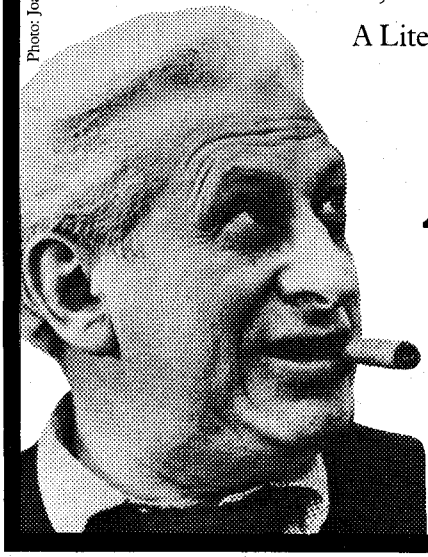
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And there are other gems as well. Later, for instance, when Soviet attempts at forming a quisling government have failed and the entire Czechoslovak leadership is hauled off to Moscow en masse, we find Mlynar and his colleagues facing down the Politburo in the Kremlin, the "agreement" of capitulation to Soviet demands agreed upon and ready for the signing:

> Suddenly a huge door flew open and about ten photographers and cameramen stampeded into the room. As if on command, the entire Soviet Politburo simultaneously rose to its feet, and each of them leaned across the table to the Czechoslovak opposite with arms wide, ready to embrace him. It was an absurd scene that the photographers' flashguns illuminated: dozens of arms belonging to the Soviet Politburo stretched and waved across the table in a row, and I suddenly imagined that a fantastic carnivorous plant was trying to entrap us in its sticky tendrils.

This, it would appear, is how the Soviet Union functions in a crisis—a combination of heavy-handed demagoguery and clownish theatrics. But at the center of it all, orchestrating it as a consummate symphonic arranger would orchestrate the most involved work, was Leonid Brezhnev:

> 'I believed you, and I stood up for you against the others,' he told Dubček reproachfully. 'Our Sasha is a good comrade,' I said. 'And you disappointed us all so terribly.' At moments like this, Brezhnev's voice would quiver with regret and he spoke haltingly, as though he were close to tears.

Later, there was Brezhnev explaining: "'For us, the results of the Second World War are inviolable, and we will defend them even at the cost of risking a new war.'"

This last passage is perhaps the key to the Prague Spring and, more specifically, to the violent Soviet reaction that finally terminated it in August 1968, barely six months after it began. The Soviet Union could never allow a piercing of the post-World War II "cordon-sanitaire" it had formed across its western borders. For that matter, it could never allow a nation where Soviet soldiers had spilled their blood for a communist ideal slip away into a weak imitation known as social democracy. Indeed, these perhaps are clues to more immediate concerns of our own time. Here, it would seem, lies one explanation of why Yugoslavia may, ultimately, be safe from the "hard option" of direct Soviet interference. Few Soviet soldiers ever spilled their blood there. Yugoslav territory forms no component of the cordon-sanitaire. And long ago, the Soviet leadership abandoned all hope for Yugoslav communism as any sort of orthodox force.

Dubček never fully appreciated these Soviet sensibilities, despite warnings from such leaders as Hungary's János Kádár whom Dubček respected highly and who himself had lived through everything Dubček was experiencing. There are repeated apologies for this naiveté of Alexander Dubček littering the pages of *Nightfrost*.

But that the naiveté existed is beyond question. And Mlynar himself cites repeated evidence:

> In January of 1969, I tried for the last time to convince him [Dubček] of what was happening. He refused to see it and said that, on the contrary, he had already come out on top in Moscow and that the troops would leave too, as soon as he had managed to persuade Brezhnev he had the situation firmly in hand.

Today, 11 years later, the Soviet troops are still very much in place throughout Czechoslovakia. Dubček is an obscure official in the Slovak Ministry of Forestry in Bratislava. Mlynar is in exile in Vienna.

Yet it is still torment for Mlynar to admit the extraordinary naiveté of this man he clearly loved almost as a brother. "I am not mentioning all this to make Dubček out to be a politically-naive simpleton," Mlynar pleads at one point. "That view was, and still is, rather widespread, but I don't agree with it. . . ."

Mlynar does, however, raise what he considers to be realistic criticisms of Dubček that ring very true. He is particularly troubled, for instance, by Dubček's failure to develop the truly international consensus that could have been Czechoslovakia's principal protection, as it has been for Yugloslavia over the years. It was critical, he felt, for the Czech leadership to undertake a

> foreign policy offensive (both within the Communist movement, with countries such as Yugoslavia, Rumania and China, and outside it, with important countries in the Third World and also with western democratic political forces and states), a policy that would have corresponded to the general spirit of the Czechoslovak reforms.

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But he admits, "I did nothing about the latter," nor did Dubček.

Finally, throughout the book, from vignettes, from long, deep passages of the blackest introspection, we learn as much about Mlynar as we do about the functioning of the Politburos and the Soviet and East European systems. This other saga which, in terms of pages, serves as the bulk of this work, is the inner story of the torment of Mlynar himself—the wrenching disillusionment of a man who has seen the ideals of much of his adult life, of a communist society and state forged from the early World War II-era socialism of Eastern Europe, transmogrified into the monster it is today. Suddenly he has been forced to concede that he will never see this ideal realized in his lifetime. It is a disillusionment far from unique in today's communist world, and the honesty with which he deals with it lends a ring of authority to the entire work. It is a cry from the depths that should not, must not, be ignored.

David A. Andelman

David A. Andelman, who served as East European correspondent of the *New York Times*, writes frequently on foreign affairs.

Mysteries

One in a series of guides, the massive work on *Twentieth-Century Crime and Mystery Writers* edited by John M. Reilly (St. Martins; $50) is a fascinating and inevitably frustrating collection, which comes the closest of all recent bibliographies to being truly indespensable. From Edward Aarons, creator of the "Assignment" series, to Israel Zangwill, who, it is argued, wrote the first "locked-room mystery," the volume wanders across the landscape of English-language mystery fiction. (There is a small section devoted to writers like Friedrich Dürrenmatt, who wrote in other languages but whose works are widely available in translation.)

The entry for each writer includes a biography, sometimes showing considerable research, at other times apparently gleaned from a dust jacket; generally excellent bibliographies, including non-mystery output, screenplays, radio plays, books written on the author, and even manuscript collections (John D. MacDonald's papers, we learn, are at the University of Florida); a "critical essay" which is, at times, truly that (as when Carolyn Heilbrun, who writes as Amanda Cross, examines P. D. James) but more often tells us that we simply must read (for example) George Baxt without really sustaining the argument. Living authors have been invited to comment on their work, and the more sensible have avoided doing so. There are full general bibliographies to the genre as well.

There are strange omissions. Reading only the shelves under A and B in my own library (and I keep only the books that strike me as being critically or historically significant to the development of such fiction) I noted 28 authors not present, including Charles Alverson, Patrick Alexander, Robert Barnard, John Braine, F. W. Bronson, R. Vernon Beste, William F. Buckley, the Canadian John Buell, and James Byrom. Sometimes assessments are strange: George Dove cannot have read Rex Burns's *An Angle of Attack* when he wrote his critical essay, though it appears in the bibliography, for the book contradicts his analysis. Dorothy Hughes, usually so good, tells one almost nothing about Gavin Black and literally nothing about Oswald Wynd, who is the same man. Someone thinks the University of Wyoming is in Cheyenne—the tiny errors are unnerving.

Still, there are so many goodies in this giant box of Crackerjacks that almost anyone will find things to like. There are perceptive essays on Noel Behn and Elleston Trevor (though generally about Trevor writing as Adam Hall) by R. Gordon Kelly. There is the presence, though only once, of Jens Peter Becker, who has written a fine study of the spy novel as yet untranslated from the German. There is E. F. Bleiler sensibly commenting on a large range of writers, and though missing Robert van Gulik's interest in Chinese pornography, spearing most authors where it hurts. There is A. Norman Jeffares, always sensible, on Nicolas Freeling, defending the death of Van der Valk for the right reason. Despite an error in the entry, there is even a happy piece on Trevanian which might set to rest the question of who the R. W. is lurking behind Jonathan Hemlock. What more can one want for $50?

Robin W. Winks

Historical Novels

The Vermillion Bridge: A Novel of 8th Century Japan

by Shelley Mydans

(Doubleday; $11.95)

Historical novels at their best recreate past worlds with an immediacy neither history nor fiction can achieve alone. Shelley Mydans's new novel, *The Vermillion Bridge*, admirably does just this for the long-dead, faraway world of eighth-century Japan, an achievement all the more remarkable for the enormous distances of time, space, and culture between that world and ours.

The setting is the brilliant imperial court at Nara. Japan is in the last stage of a century-long transition from primitive isolation to a drastic reshaping in the image of the high civilization of T'ang China. By 735, when the novel begins, Chinese ways have been imported whole: centralized government, hierarchical bureaucracy, the way of writing, literature, arts—and Buddhist religion. Some of these innovations have been accepted with ease. Others, particularly Buddhism, are provoking discontent in the countryside and rebellion at court.

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rulers; indeed, a third-century Chinese account calls Japan a "queen country." But after Abé there was to be no empress in Japan for nearly 1,000 years.

Shelley Mydans's search for what actually happened at eighth-century Nara, and why, animates the history she recounts. Abé and the imperial courtiers are brought to vivid life, men and women who are Japanese, and so human as to engage our sympathies. The story begins when the young Abé, heiress to the throne, is being tutored in traditional Shinto ceremony, Chinese classics, and Buddhist learning, to prepare her for her future duties. Her intelligence and piety would make the task easy, were it not for her lively, spontaneous nature.

Nevertheless, when at 32 she becomes empress she docilely does what is expected of her. Japanese monarchs were descendants of the Sun Goddess, the principal Shinto deity. They alone could speak to the gods and perform the taxing rites on which the well-being of the island depended. Now the modernizing Chinese reforms have added equally demanding Buddhist prayer and study to the traditional imperial duties, making the religious role of the sovereign all-absorbing. Of necessity, then, Abé, like her father before her, assigns almost all state responsibility to her ministers, chief among them the men of the Fujiwara clan.

After 10 years Abé abdicates, a common imperial practice. But the weak boy who succeeds her allows the Fujiwara to grab almost total power. The kingdom groans. Outraged at such misrule, Abé, with the emotional support of the Buddhist monk Dōkyō, reclaims her throne and punishes the usurpers.

Now, at 45, empress for the second time, Abé makes Dōkyō chief minister, not a Fujiwara. This self-assertiveness outrages the court—not because Abé is a woman, but because she refuses to be a mere symbol. Buddhism—at that time and place, intellectual modernity—is all-important to her, and she insists upon protecting it. But then as now the Japanese expected their semi-divine sovereigns to reign, not to rule. This Abé would not do, and so after her time women were barred from the Throne of Heaven.

This is history whose meaning is revealed in the telling, a story of a past exotic in scene and custom, myth and legend, but informed by a theme poignantly familiar to us as we watch the anguish of modernization today, from Iran to Cambodia to China. And it is told in a style faithful to that understated, exquisite elegance which is so quintessentially Japanese.

Beatrice K. Hofstadter

Beatrice K. Hofstadter is a writer and historian.

Note:
Stanley Kauffmann's
Albums of Early Life has
just been published
by Ticknor & Fields.

Confederates
by Thomas Keneally

(Harper & Row; $12.95)

In the novels of Australian writer Thomas Keneally war unfolds like a grim roll call to judgment in which heroism is of the least significance. The soldiers in *Confederates*, Keneally's evocation of the American Civil War, take a sort of gritty pride in themselves, in their friends, in homespun memories of life before the war, in the earthy humanity Keneally always counts on as the most reliable bivouac. In *Confederates*, Keneally puts us in the unusual postion of being on the losers' side and at the heart of the south.

Keneally marches into the conflict with the Shenandoah Volunteers, part of Stonewall Jackson's troops. Most of them are simple farm folk like young Usaph Bumpass, a stubborn, naive, uxorious type, or Bolly Quintard, a 70-year-old satyr who protects himself with tall tales and an umbrella. They are joined by mountain men and schoolteachers, college boys and backwoods adventurers, conscripts, and Stonewall Jackson himself. Keneally shows that there are more differences than similarities in such groups, and hierarchies of the strongest kinds.

The common obsessions, though, are women and war. Keneally's women are passionate creatures palpitating to be taken, but at least he has brought them down from the marble pedestal of southern femininity. More cool-headed is Dora Whipple, an efficient hospital matron who is a northern spy. She is Keneally's way of talking about taking responsibility for one's actions even among the confusions of an age losing its innocence.

The war is "holy." And the war is wrong. Keneally condemns the slaveholding south as hypocritical and self-deceiving. As his arguments pile up, the struggle to defend slavery escalates from a calm reminiscent of Winslow Homer's camp scenes to the full-scale horror of a Goya. The men often don't know what they're fighting for. As for the self-image of a patrician, benevolent south, it gets blown to bits on the battlefields until the streams of the countryside run red with blood and the fields take a planting of bullets.

Thanks to historical hindsight and the ominous anticipation Keneally builds up, we know that the long march through his landscape is headed toward doom. There is less tension about who will live than attention paid to moments of dying. His few survivors seem to have outlived everything before the fact; they consort with the supernatural at a borderline between life and death. English reviewers have tried to pin *The Red Badge of Courage* on *Confederates*. I wouldn't go that far. But Thomas Keneally is to be admired for the way he enters the past by transforming the awesome statistics of loss into human tragedies.

Celia Betsky

Celia Betsky is a critic and a commentator for National Public Radio.

Emmeline
by Judith Rossner

(Simon & Schuster; $12.95)

The backwoods of Fayette, Maine, and the cotton mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, in the mid-19th century where *Emmeline* takes place are worlds away from the New York City streets where Judith Rossner set *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, the best seller that made her famous five years ago. But Rossner's literary leap is not as admirably adventurous as it sounds. *Emmeline* is not a full-fledged historical novel, but a historical romance, heavier on the petticoated swoons than on the subtle interweav-

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ing of public and private destinies in the newly industrialized America of the 1840s.

In setting her historical scene Rossner relies heavily on two elementary facts about 19th-century America: that religion was the dominant tradition and industrialization the alienating innovation. She adds historical detail—mill machinery, boarding-house routine, railroad building, exciting tales from the west, and ominous news from the south. But Rossner's old New England seems arranged from the outside rather than imagined from within.

This simplicity of vision is partly justified by Rossner's identification with her unsophisticated protagonist. When 14-year-old Emmeline is sent from the poverty-stricken family farm in Maine to make money in the Lowell mills, it is appropriate that she has only a crude understanding of the new world she enters and an unreflective attachment to the religion she brings with her. Rossner convincingly evokes Emmeline's initial horror at the monster mill and then her naive willingness to see the mill in familial terms; the lonely girl is easily and uncomprehendingly seduced by the fatherly Irish overseer in the weaving room who offers, briefly, the care and warmth she finds nowhere else.

However, as Emmeline's youthful shape takes on womanly contours, the historical perspective remains flat. The book turns into a predictable melodrama, which I won't quite give away, though it gives itself away almost immediately. The crux of the plot is that Emmeline's contours get even more womanly as a result of Mr. Maguire's attentions. Illicit sex and incest are the supposedly shocking revelations of the book. "You have to kind of gentle down readers if you're using a subject like this," Rossner explained in a recent *Publishers Weekly* interview. Her strategy works too well. We flip through pages of her clear prose, our sympathies never really roused by her transparent plot or characters, our sensibilities barely jarred by the broken taboos.

Rossner, however, had a very different reaction when she heard about Emmeline's tragedy from a real-life Fayette resident, 94-year-old Nettie Mitchell (whom Rossner credits in the novel's epigraph). "Nettie's remembering gave me goose pimples," Rossner told the *Publishers Weekly* interviewer, "and that's a sure sign for me." Unfortunately that's not a sure sign for her readers. Rossner has not made her imagination work hard enough at transforming the melodramatic truth into more than shallow fiction.

Ann Hulbert

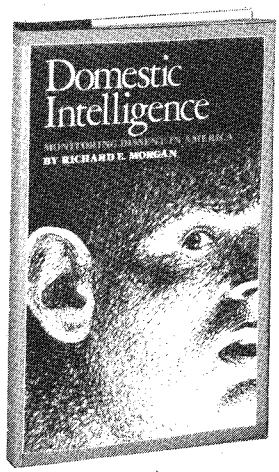
Columbine
by Raymond Kennedy

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $12.95)

He is a Jimmy Stewart character, all right, a tall, awkward sailor just back from the Pacific, more sensitive than sexual, full of innocence and ambition; but Columbine is no June Allyson, even though she is the girl next door, and even though this novel is a classic girl-next-door story and so irresistibly summons the pert picture of June beaming up at Jimmy as if at her very own Mount Rushmore. No, Columbine is described as looking like sultry Gene Tierney, and is 13 to Henry Starbuck Flynn's 23, and is saucily precocious, a veritable Lolita of Hadley Falls, Massachusetts, an industrial town in the western reaches of that state, which Mr. Kennedy renders with an intimacy born of memory. The novel is the enjoyable and often affecting story of their fated love, which, thanks to Henry's sexual reticence, the jealousy of one of Columbine's three sisters, and two unmailed love letters, achieves only a fugitive expression. Indeed, so oblique is their romance that the reader can't blame Columbine for taking up with the town satyr, nor Henry for seeking solace in the buxom embraces of a local barmaid.

Mr. Kennedy strains credulity by making Henry even less comprehending of his feelings than Jimmy Stewart, and sometimes he overdoes the symbolism—the novel is strewn with canes, police batons, and fallen trees, all to remind us of Henry's excess of scruple over eros. But these defects are the obverse of Mr. Kennedy's salient virtue as a novelist, which is a marked, if occasionally too marked, artfulness in the management of his story and in the deployment of images and details to suggest meaning, and to unify and lend rhythm to a long but, thanks to these devices, satisfyingly coherent tale. Unobtrusively present throughout are the sights, sounds, and sensibility of the year 1945, a time when the shocks of the war were making themselves felt in the lives of those who had gotten through it seemingly unaffected, growing their victory gardens and raising their children according to lights whose immutability the changes of the post-war world would fast put in doubt.

Jack Beatty



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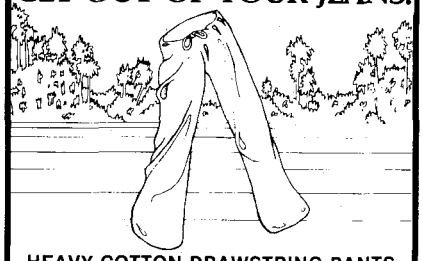

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Washington Diarist

Plugs

The author of a new book almost always has two complaints. One is that the publisher is willfully keeping the book unavailable in bookstores, out of fear that someone might try to buy it. The other is that friends are not being imaginative enough in finding occasions to help promote the product. Recently I've heard the first complaint from three people. Two of them are Ronald Steel, author of *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Atlantic/Little, Brown), and Jonathan Alter, co-author of the Ralph Nader *Citizen Guide* to the presidential candidates (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), whom I hereby mention to defuse the second complaint. The third disgruntled author is my friend and mentor Charlie Peters, editor-in-chief of the *Washington Monthly* and author of *How Washington Really Works* (Addison-Wesley). His book—called, once again, *How Washington Really Works*—has made the Washington best seller list and received praise from the daily and Sunday *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Time* magazine, Theodore White, Richard Reeves—from everybody, in fact, except the reviewer for, uh, well, *The New Republic*. How a reviewer could mistake *How Washington Really Works* by Charles Peters for anything but a uniquely incisive analysis of modern government, presented with style and wit, and full of wisdom about American society in general, is something I will never understand. The two or three chapters I helped to write strike me, upon rereading, as especially brilliant, but this in no way clouds or biases my judgment about the excellence of the rest of the book. *TNR*'s reviewer obviously was prejudiced by having had nothing whatever to do with the project until it fell into his inadequate hands for evaluation. It is easy to carp, Mr. Cohen. What is not easy is to produce a truly important and beautiful work of art like *How Washington Really Works* by William Shakespeare, I mean by Charles Peters. When you buy it at your local bookstore, you will understand my confusion. And if Addison-Wesley has succeeded in keeping *How Washington Really Works* out of your local bookstore, just send me a check for $10.95 ($5.95 paper), and I will send you a copy autographed by the author. OK, Charlie?

In the heyday of the Great Society there were several news stories, I believe, about obscure Polynesian or Caribbean islands that wished to buy Lyndon Johnson from America and install him as their leader. Very amusing at the time, but in hindsight it seems clear that we should have sold him for whatever he would bring in the way of tribal artifacts and rare spices. Thus another failed export opportunity from the days when American goods were still the standard of the world. Today no one would pay a nickel for one of our politicians. Indeed the day may have arrived when we must give up the dream of self-sufficiency in political leaders and begin importing quality products from abroad. I propose, in short, that we buy Helmut Schmidt. Schmidt is a true social democrat and advocate of the welfare state, but also a hard-nosed economic realist with a record of taking inflation seriously and knowing what to do about it. His foreign policy views are similarly level-headed. Seriousness (as opposed to solemnity) is precisely what our home-grown politicians lack. They are obsessed with image. Schmidt, by contrast, is no-nonsense. Being interviewed on American television a few months ago, he chain-smoked throughout the show. It was not a very attractive sight, but I was impressed. Would any American pol, however addicted, display such a human weakness before the cameras? Schmidt offers his policies and their results, not his person, for judgment. I suppose the Germans would want an arm and a leg for him.

Last month's military coup in Turkey is one of those stories that make all news seem ridiculous. It was an event that had to be treated as very important, yet one about which nobody had any strong feelings whatsoever, including the Turkish people and even the military leaders themselves. So the entire world went on automatic pilot: ministers held private meetings; State Department spokesmen expressed concern but cautioned against overreaction; editorialists struggled to react at all. It was a great opportunity for the new computerized typesetting equipment that has swept the nation's newspapers over the past few years. These technical wonders permit reporters, composing their stories on television screens, to preprogram commonly used phrases like "By Sally Quinn/First of a Series," or "according to a highly placed source who asked not to be identified," and to insert them in articles at the touch of a button. Whole chunks of military coup coverage could be handled this way. Take, for example, the beginning of the *Times*'s September 13 lead story about Turkey:

[INSERT COUNTRY] COUP CHIEFS MAKE VOW TO BRING STABILITY TO NATION

[INSERT NUMBER] LEGISLATORS ROUNDED UP

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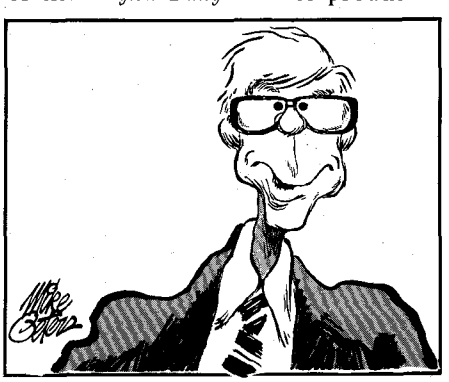
The officers, who had warned the civilian leaders several times this year to end their bickering and try to solve staggering problems, also pledged. . . .

And so on. Or better yet, there should be a minimum required amount of bloodshed, or at least of enthusiasm among the perpetrators, before these distant events should be drawn to our attention at all.

Here, for the record, is a picture of our candidate John Anderson which we didn't use with our endorsement last week. We asked our friend Mike Peters of the *Dayton Daily News* to produce a



drawing that wouldn't seem idolatrous in the context, and that would undercut Anderson's image as someone who is stiff and humorless. "Sweet and goofy," I think, was my unfortunate choice of adjectives. Mike succeeded too well. Believe it or not, he's an Anderson supporter too.

M.E.K.

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Myth:

Government regulation benefits railroads.

Fact:

America's freight railroads are hampered by government regulations, and that puts the squeeze on everyone.

Today's freight railroads are subject to rules and regulations that date from horse-and-buggy days. Heavy-handed strictures that don't apply to most other businesses or even the railroads' direct competitors—the largely unregulated truck and barge industries.

While competition is virtually free to raise or lower prices to meet changing market conditions, railroads are not. America's freight railroads can't change their freight rates, drop unprofitable lines, add new services, or even initiate innovative pricing that could save consumers money—without first getting government approval. And that's a process which can involve excessive delays.

Doesn't make much sense in these tight-money times, does it? But it's a fact. And as long as non-polluting, energy-efficient freight railroads are denied the right to compete equally for business in the free market, the consumer will continue to pay the extra freight—in terms of added dollars or poorer service, or both.

For more information, write: Regulation, Dept. W, Association of American Railroads, American Railroads Building, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Surprise:

In freight transportation, the market is the best regulator.

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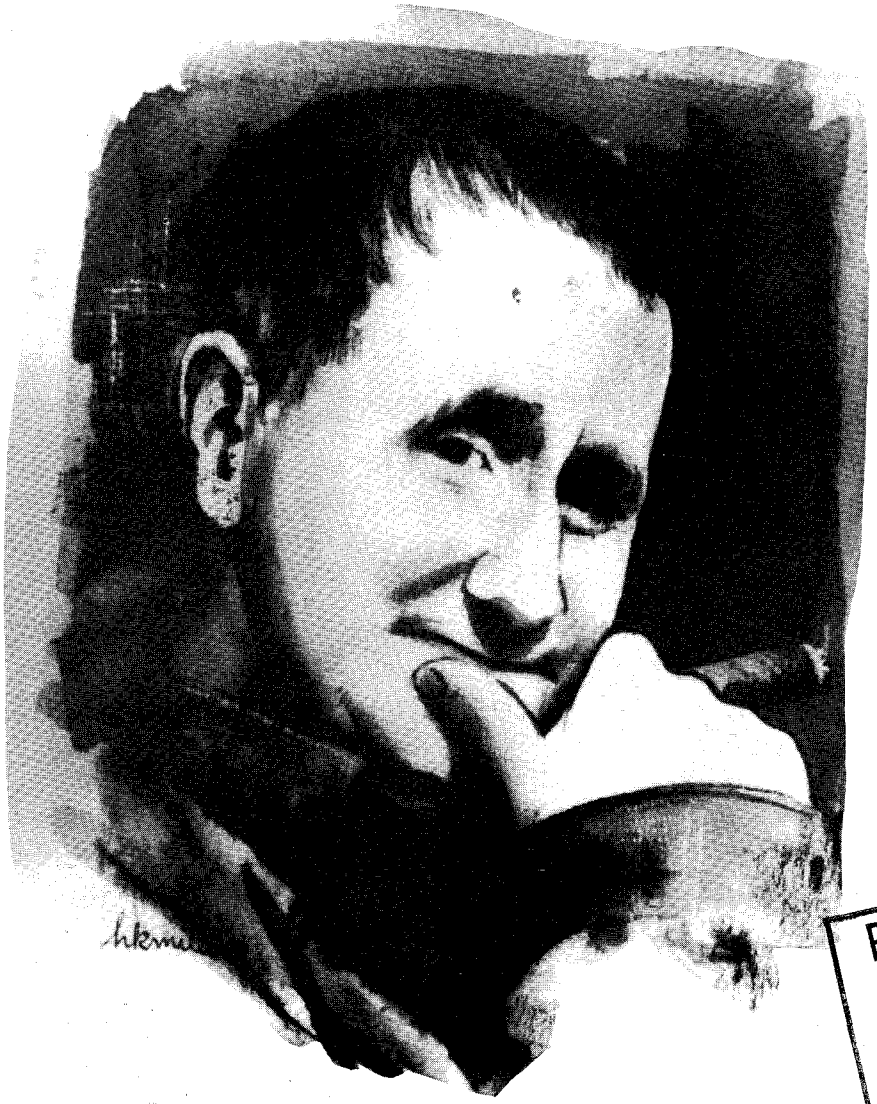

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But circumstances won't have it so."*

—BERTOLT BRECHT

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